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J.R.L. Anderson

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Arab Political Memoirs

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NOVEMBER 1972

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Eugène Ionesco

Facing the Inferno

An Address in Salzburg

A FESTIVAL of music or a theatre festival seems to be a kind of challenge to our universal fear. I feel as if I were upon an island lashed by the billowing waves. A few countries in Europe, a little patch on our broad earth, still offer us a dubious refuge; beyond rages the inferno.

Even on this island, steadily undermined from inside, one feels the devastating repercussions. Will this Festival still take place in one or two years' time? All kinds of catastrophe could happen tomorrow. Our so-called culture seems to be nothing but a house of cards. There is a question-mark after everything.

In the last century men could still believe that they were in a position to foresee their destiny and the future trend of history. But since then everything they built has become fragile. Revolutions undertaken in the name of liberty and justice, for liberty and justice, have only brought tyranny and inferno. On the other hand men hoped that economic problems could be solved by industrial development. An age of welfare for all and sundry was the common expectation.

But history, an irrational force, dashed our hopes. Industry and its products brought us to the verge of bankruptcy with the despoliation of the earth and its atmosphere. A cosmic catastrophe threatens us. But perhaps before this the hate that stirs up one race against the other, the disappointed hopes of nations and classes, will have quenched the candle of existence.

All humanity has become conscious of the misery of existence or, rather, the misery of existence under present-day conditions. Partisans of opposed political convictions are ready to fly at each other; those who eschew politics altogether pine for the end of mankind and their own suicide in a world of cruelty and violence. Everybody fears everybody else.

"The world must be destroyed, for it is full of corruption, ugliness and death," said Antonin Artaud. Strindberg was less aggressive: "I do not hate man, I fear him. . . ."

We still have a few intelligent people, especially among the young, who will not be resigned and await the inevitable disaster. They continue to appeal to the conscience of the world to prevent, to cease, the preparations for universal destruction. But the conscience of the world sleeps on. There's no going back now. The powerful weapons of devastation and the innumerable products which pollute earth, water, and air can only be multiplied, to the annihilation of everything.

ALL THIS CAN ONLY BE EXPLAINED by man's destructive instincts and his enmity towards his fellow man. We live in an age of wrath. Wrath alone can lead us so irresistibly and inevitably to the cataclysm. Our civilisation was on the search for happiness but then encountered only reverses, misery and death. I am one man among three billion. How can my voice be heard? I am crying in an over-populated wilderness. Neither I nor any other can find a way out. There is, I believe, no way out.

If man had not wanted to destroy himself everything could have turned out all right. There might not have been any exploitation of man by man, no genocide. And why has it turned out like this? "Why do we not love each other?", is the wonderfully naive question of Dostoevsky's Idiot. And why, indeed, do we not love each other or at least live with each other in indifference? A friend once said to me, discomfited by the misery of humanity: "The human adventure has already gone on too long; we must put an end to it! . . ."

Strange philosophers are they, those masters of contemporary thought. They preach the liberation and unchaining of all our desires. We see, however, that our unrestrained desires oppose the desires of others and lead to a catastrophic explosion. This dream we have of a great festivity reminds me of the Carnival of Cologne, the beer and sausage festival which ends with people vomiting in the streets and a dozen or so corpses strewn around the city. But the thinkers of our

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time, theorists of violence, consciously or unconsciously, hope for more: they want a universal conflagration towards which, indeed, our desires and passions are already steering us, as we can see.

The so-called anti-bourgeois liberation of all desires, seemingly justified by the philosophies which are now fashionable, can only precipitate a universal orgy, the destruction of culture, the final end of everything. But what is this culture in the last resort? Nothing but a screen which shelters us from our own fear of misery, of disgust, of sorrow, of fright, of death above all. To what extent can so many works of art lighten the burden of life for us—so many paintings, operas, novels, dramas, moral treatises, so many musical compositions?

FOR CENTURIES we have catalogued and recorded in gazettes and in works of art our aberrations and our difficulties in living from a humanistic point of view. By expressing our misery in books we hoped to keep it at a distance. We thought we had banished evil from our lives. The art of today is by and large a store-room, a museum of our despairs. Nice sentiments alone don't make good literature, said André Gide, and one could add that happiness does not suffice either. Humanist culture has thrown us back on ourselves, which is exactly what we sought to avoid. It has all recoiled upon us. Our desires and our passions which we thought were suppressed return unchained ten times, nay a thousand times, stronger. One can count on one hand the works created out of joy and contentment and destined to bring us joy and contentment. The walls of our culture are crumbling, and the wind blows away the flimsy screen we have erected between us and ourselves. The demons we thought banished rise up within us and lacerate us. Our wounds are open, we have been skinned alive.

No form of social structure can satisfy us: leftist or rightist, both are abominable. Totalitarian régimes are still able to assert themselves through propaganda and suppress their subjects by the use of stupefying slogans. Everything lacks a secure foundation. Religions have become powerless. They afford no consolation, offer no enlightenment. They have no answer, they know no solution. Everything is exhausted and there is refuge nowhere. In the books, as well as in the looks, of our fellow men our own derangement is reflected. At a word the masses will lunge at each other, or put an end to themselves. One spark and the whole world is in flames.

The roads of India are choked with the corpses of the poor; among the rich in Scandinavia the number of suicides has doubled. The youth have taken to drugs—life has no sense for them, they are without ideals and without a future. Workers hate their work. Where are the masters who can show us the light? If there are any, why do they not raise their voices? Three-quarters of the world is undernourished, the whole world is spiritually starving. And when the economic problems are solved, when there is social welfare and sufficient nourishment for all, that is still not enough: we have a deeper hunger.

WHETHER A MARXIST OR a psycho-analyst, an opponent of Freud or a supporter of Nietzsche, every philosopher is faced with the same problem: how are we to live? What must we free ourselves from in order to live? from our instincts? from prohibitions? from revolution? from counter-revolution? Are we to break the chain of prohibitions or make it more secure? We can no longer find a balance between the passion for life, the insatiable desires, and the control which keeps these desires in check. Passions trample on one another and the imperialisms of East and West immerse the world in an atmosphere of violence which fits in with no ideology. To help the poor, to promote justice, to satisfy hunger, to quench thirst—these are not the goals men seek. Theirs is a simple alternative: to control the world or inaugurate a bloodbath. We have long since known that the totalitarian states have only succeeded in establishing the most rigorous bourgeois bureaucracies in the world. And this is just the direction which the young bourgeois anti-bourgeois are taking, whether they know it or not, whether they admit it or not. Perhaps they instinctively prefer a rigid bourgeoisie with functionaries, police, and unyielding "fathers" because Western society has become soft. I am not contradicting myself when I say that the youth of today oscillate aimlessly between the wish for an unhindered development of all desires and the wish to be subjected to an implacable order. We do not know what we want, we do not understand what leads us on. The forces of irrationality outstrip reason. It is more than probable that we want a number of things at the same time, even if these are mutually opposed.

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WHEN I THINK of Spengler I can, I believe, assert that we are here faced with a battle for the *imperium mundi*. The rich nations quarrel for possession of the world through economic or political colonisation of the smaller nations. Of course one occupies only in order to liberate! To repeat, the concern is not for hunger or thirst or justice; even economic problems take second place. That which goads on all the politicians of the world is the lust for power, the strongest goad of all. We have seen that culture has disappointed us; we thought it would free us from fear and despair; we thought it could be salvational. But we must state: our culture is non-humane and non-humanistic. One can also say that we hoped it would serve as depository for our misery. The crisis in culture and in civilisation has been averred by everybody. Do we know many works of literature that are unburdened and serene? Do we see many plays with a happy end or plays that show us a path to follow? Our unhappiness seems deeper, more oppressive and more inevitable than ever. Art, literature, and theatre have found no remedy for the suffering in our souls: they have only increased it and made our passions more dissolute. The evil which culture would denounce has only become all the more conscious. Our culture has thrown our wretchedness and misery back in our faces and withheld from us any solution or remedy.

Perhaps the extreme politicising which we are witnessing has its roots in our despair. Perhaps, many think, politics can give us what music and literature have denied us. But politics will only accomplish the decline of mankind. The exploitation of man by man is no longer the main problem; it is, rather, the immeasurably deeper desire of man to rule his fellow men. The subjugation of the many by the few is the problem of our age. It arises from the lust for power which has a paranoic character. In all parts of the world the lunatics of power lay the yoke of slavery on the shoulders of hundreds of millions. The existence of millions is threatened if they do not accept the beliefs—no matter whether they are called heresies or ideologies—imposed by tyrants and dictators. New catechisms must be read and absorbed, the questions with their silly and rudimentary answers.

The slogan, "It is forbidden to forbid", will soon become, "It is forbidden not to forbid. One must only forbid." The freedom fanatics submit and propagate the most inexorable decrees against freedom. Apparently the longing for liberty is, in reality, only a wish to submit. In other words, under the mask of desiring freedom lurks the real desire to become enslaved. One can relieve oneself of an unbearable burden by resigning, living in slavery, forgoing the realisation of one's own personality. That can be a tremendous relief.

BUT THIS RELIEF is not permanent. The downtrodden are never oppressed enough. The slaves must be ruled by the whip and forced to give daily proof of their total submission and the unconditional abdication of their personality. Man may no longer be a human being, a fellow citizen; he must be totally and absolutely functionalised, alienated from himself, de-naturalised until both soul and person are no longer definable. If one resists, the prison becomes an inferno, and we already have plenty of witnesses of this inferno. In the countries that are still free, or half-free, hardly any attention is paid to them. Man has little concern for the catastrophes of others. He will not accept that something similar could happen to him, too. With the same thoughtlessness and levity men steer towards the same dogmatic politicising. Does the explosion of desires really require curbing? Does liberty coalesce with slavery? Where is the way out? If life is bad, if men hate each other, if one loves neither oneself nor one's neighbour, if everything is unbearable, if science and culture no longer have any answer to the most important questions and if they can no longer improve anything but let us glide to the very edge of the abyss—then man will seek in politics the answer to his questions.

We have established that politics can scarcely satisfy the essential requirements of mankind and that exaggerated politicising can lead to even greater evils than we now endure or have ever endured. Soon we will have completed two hundred years of revolution. And revolutions will continue. The myth of regenerative revolution will continue to spread and the majority of mankind will fall prey to it, though the overthrow and bankruptcy of revolutions advise us otherwise. Present history demonstrates this again and again. Political leaders do not love men, they want to make instruments of them. If I said one should make friendly compromises with them, people would laugh in my face. Naturally, for there only exist relationships that are based on force. But are not, or were not, the articles of faith of the revolutionaries fraternity, brother-

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hood, comradeship, unity, concord, liberty, companionship, equality? If I cannot take seriously the ideas, the mottoes and the slogans of revolutions, how can I take revolution itself seriously? How can I believe in revolutions if they have not introduced or restored either friendship or fraternity? They haven't even tried to do so! As soon as a revolution has got a foothold it thinks of punishment, expiation, revenge. Revolutions take place neither in the name of, nor for the sake of, love. Friendship is an idea which has been suppressed by politics.

LOVE AND CONTEMPLATION have not become foolish ideas: they are simply ideas which no longer exist. The very notion of metaphysics evokes derision if not outright anger.

The crisis began a long time ago. The decay of our culture had perhaps already set in in the seventeenth century. Culture became ever more humanistic instead of metaphysical, more and more psychological instead of spiritual. The statues in our cathedrals often show a smile on the lips of the saints and angels which we can no longer interpret today. And yet the serene poise of these figures could be an example for us: the harmony of these columns, forms and figures could lead us to a spiritual serenity if we knew how to look at them. Man circles about on his planet as if in a cage because he has forgotten that he can look up to heaven. What are the questions he asks?—how can I live well? how can I gain possession of the world? how can I enjoy myself? how can I cram myself with good things? how can I produce things to serve my own pleasure? how can I have a good time without bothering about others or allowing them to have a good time too (not even thinking about the happiness or misery of others)? how can I industrialise humanity until it is exhausted? That is what is called humanism, and that is what men propose for themselves.

Every spiritual and metaphysical consideration is left out of the reckoning. The problem of the future, our existence in the universe, the value or the insecurity of existential conditions—all that is brushed to one side. The central problem, the question at the heart of our existence, has been forgotten: the meaning of death. Our ultimate end has been squeezed out of our thinking because we have only immediate objects in view. And so we no longer know what to do or where to go. It has become impossible to live because we want only to live.

Let us look about us. The world has lost its direction. No doubt, we have no shortage of ideologies of the most diverse kinds. But they lead nowhere. Pleasure-addiction has dislodged genuine joy. We have a choice between torpidity and death, the one through the fulfilment of our wayward desires, the other through the exploitation of jostling desires within us which clash with the desires of our fellow men.

WE HAVE FORGOTTEN the meaning of contemplation. We are no longer able to see. We cannot resist the general bustle for a minute and contemplate in stillness this same bustle. We cannot see either the proximity or the remoteness of our world. We have lost the pleasure of looking at it. And yet, if we really did look around us and above us and within us we could discover again the freshness of wonder, a child-like wonder that would make the world as fresh and young again as on the first day of creation. We must recover the gift of wonder. Bach had this sense of wonder and awe. And Mozart possessed that joy, which had its origin in himself alone, filled his whole being and spread its influence round about him.

But have we not forgotten how to listen to Bach? And here, in the land of Mozart, are we still in a position to hear him and receive his message? For the message of Mozart is not just any mundane message, or just any aesthetic message; it is not just a contribution that has its place in the history of culture.

I have been very pessimistic. We still have Mozart who speaks to us of another joy, as inexplicable as it is profound—but are we still really capable of understanding his language and his message?

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Fritz Rudolf Fries

The Banana King

IF I HAVE TO LIE here anyway: between 330 and 350 feet above sea level, 51° 20′ latitude north and 12° 23′ longitude east; if I have to do this anyway it's all the same to me how I pass the time. The doctors say four to eight weeks, lying flat, then we'll see. Meanwhile all I see is the wall opposite and on the right the door through which a stream of people come and go, doctors and cleaning women, visitors and nurses, internes, kitchen staff, senior doctors on their rounds. On the left the other bed, by the window, and Zeisig, who pulls the covers right up to his chin as if the window were hardly ever closed, the window that lets in the chiming and tinkling from the Russian church, depending on the schedule of the priest or the Orthodox religion or whatever. I am quite satisfied with the information from the library across the square, a bulwark of knowledge where the city is lowest. 350 feet above sea level. Not much of an altitude, really, A mean annual rainfall of 23·72 inches, mean annual temperature of 47 degrees. The prevailing winds over the city, I read, are westerly.

It was while crossing the Elster that Prince Poniatowski, who fought on the side of Napoleon, drowned. These events are recalled by the monument on the Ranstädter Steinweg commemorating the blowing up of the bridge, and by the Poniatowski monument on the Lessing Strasse (Plan B3). The Battle of Leipzig, which lasted three days, entailed huge losses on both sides: the Prussians lost 16,000 men and 600 officers, the Russians 12,000 men and 860 officers, the Austrians 14,000 men and 400 officers. The French counted 30,000 dead and wounded and 15,000 prisoners, and left 23,000 men behind in field hospitals. . . . The expansion of the city proceeds unabated.

What puzzles me here is the distinction between men and officers. And the 93rd edition of the *Guide Book* fails to explain this in 1913. Zeisig was then ten years old. Don't imagine that I feel like telling you his life story now. I have time on my hands, from four to eight weeks, other claims on my attention. For example, this imprint that makes me suspicious of the guide book: *Authorised by the Regional Army Command.* Besides, there have never been 30,000 dead all at one time. One man might have got away. Zeisig, for instance.

It all began peacefully enough. A Sorbian settlement, fishermen's huts, simple folk who caught what they needed in the Pleisse or Parthe Rivers and shared it with their wives and children. Lipsk or Lipzk or Lipitz: all existing in the shadow of the Slavic word *lipa*, linden. One has only to think of Lindenau: linden meadow. I remember distinctly how as a child I used to be sent acoss the street to get beer from the Lindenhof, at one time a Customs station between Lindenau and the next district. We lived in the next district. After the war. Three inches of Pall Mall cost eight marks. Strains from the oompah-band at the Lindenhof throbbed on to the hot, treeless street. The proprietress would smile at the dancers and draw off the beer, while in the back room her crippled husband sat doing the accounts. After the war everything was still "Military Command," and civilian cars drove around with funny-looking stickers in a foreign language. The band at the Lindenhof was led by a violinist who stood heroically fiddling away all evening. The hits of the day had titles like: *A handful of rainbow dreams,* or: *Let's ride in the dreamboat of love.*

We lie here scooping soup into our mouths. To the sound of the evening chimes

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from atop the gilded onion spire next door. In the hospital garden, leaves are falling. It is autumn, of course. Zeisig asks how he does it, the priest, that bell-ringing. One just doesn't know enough, says Zeisig, when I can't help him. If we had a radio at least we wouldn't need to keep asking the nurses the time. A radio would distract Zeisig from asking his questions. Just because I read books he takes me for an encyclopedia. He has a remarkable memory for prices. I open my book and ask him the tariff for horse-drawn cabs (standard, red disc) in 1913: For the first half-mile, says Zeisig from his stiff throat, 70 pfennigs; for each subsequent quarter-mile, ten pfennigs.

Right, I say, and look for more complicated questions.

SOMETIMES Zeisig sings, when he feels better, when the pain in his throat and the back of his neck is tolerable. He is altogether a very entertaining person. The nurses enjoy coming to our room. Zeisig receives them standing on the bed, the covers drawn up to his chin so that they hang down like a heavy robe; then he hops up and down, his big nose outlined sharply against the bare windowpane that lets in the gentle chimes, the rosy evening light, we listen for the streetcar, people get out, visitors to the hospital, or cross the street to the library and improve their minds and ask to have books reserved in their name.

Even in those days, replies Zeisig, the General Omnibus Company carried passengers from Connewitz *via* Koch-Peters-Hain Strasse to the main railway station. No, no, my friend, Rome wasn't built in a day, you know.

The foundation stone was laid during the seventh or eighth century, I say, intending to give him pleasure with my information. What do you mean: or, says Zeisig. Either or: many a man's come to grief on that.

He chokes on his porridge, mumbling his repeated: Yes we have no bananas. Zeisig is sixty-two. Above the sharp nose rises a high forehead divided into two bays by his hair that grows in a peak. His hair is black, sparse on the crown, his eyes are black, his eyebrows a solid black line. From the side it is a gaunt, sharp face; from the front it seems fuller because of the broad forehead. His disease is located in the neck vertebrae, he has trouble moving his head freely, his posture is such as might have been caused by a constant anxious listening. When he looks across my bed towards the door during visiting hours, waiting for his wife, he has to turn his head and sunken chest in a single movement. His wife dyes her hair blond, wears youthful clothes. Well, my pet: says Zeisig, holding out his hands to her.

Zeisig married very young, at a time when the city still had its 17,000 undamaged houses inhabited by more than 580,000 men, women, and children. Zeisig played football in the Jewish Athletic Club "Isaiah." One day his wife turned up with a girl friend who was running around with the left half-back, a wine waiter at Auerbach's Keller: *sommelyeh*, says Zeisig. And so it all began, stormy courtship, speedy marriage, civil ceremony, no children. Just as well, considering the times that soon descended like the seven plagues. Zeisig was a street vendor. With a stall at the corner of Nicolai Strasse. At five in the morning he would push his barrow to the wholesale market, sniff at the bunches that had just come in, detecting the overripe places; these he had cut out right away and put aside for his competitors. He bought only the best. The Best from Zeisig: was his slogan. The confidence of his customers was based on the quality of his merchandise. People walking early in the morning along the Brühl, the smell of fur-dressing stinging their nostrils, would pause at Zeisig's stall: a few bananas for some small change, one selected, peeled, the fruit popped in the mouth.

The furriers bought from him, the shop-girls, the saleswomen from Brenninkmeyer's, as well as the professors who lectured on Goethe and the students who wrote down the professors' thoughts on Goethe in their notebooks. So long, that is, as the buying of a banana could not be interpreted as anything alien on the grounds that the banana had not been known, say, to the Cimbri and the Teutons living in the Auental. Centuries ago Zeisig's ancestors had migrated to the city by way of the Great Salt Road and subsequently become as settled here as the descendants of the Sorbians and the Wends who used an axe to argue matters of faith with Charlemagne. The fact that once a month he went to a concert in the Gewandhaus (when he was

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short of cash, to the dress rehearsal on Wednesday mornings, he says) might have had something to do with the culture of his forefathers, who in their Eternal Book had handed down the belief that man does not live by bread (or bananas) alone. And Sundays to an operetta at the Central Theatre on the Thomas Ring, price of a gallery seat one mark.

Didn't last, though: says Zeisig from his bed. The professors, for instance: from the oven of their knowledge they could take out, prewarmed, whatever happened to be required, and they fed their students the notion that Zeisig's bananas were not a good ingredient for a Thousand-Year-Reich soup. Zeisig didn't catch on that fast and accused the suppliers at the market when customers stayed away, skirted his stand, looked askance at his wares under the awning. The wholesalers wouldn't listen. Business as usual. They offered him apples and cabbages of blameless origin from the fertile Magdeburg area, or perhaps shaken from the trees bordering the highway between Dreiskau and Kleinpötzschau. So Zeisig tried his hand at these, setting out highly polished Gravensteins or Golden Permains, rough-skinned Boskoop varieties, white and red cabbages that looked as if they had crocheted borders.

DURING A FOOTBALL game between the Isaiahs and the Lindenau Vikings, the players started beating each other up over a free goal-kick, and the ruckus spread to the spectators. The usual get-together for a beer in the cafeteria after the game was omitted that day. Frau Zeisig had to treat a black eye. She had seen the faces of the others; she realised they had more in mind than just raising Cain.

So they've got it into their heads, she would have said that evening in the two-room apartment with the outside toilet in the Rosental Gasse, that you Jews are the cause of all our troubles.

What d'you mean, the cause of all your troubles? snapped Zeisig, in those days a young man with mocking eyes, his check sports cap shading his black eye.

500,000 people, half of whom fall for the idea that they've got to blame you so that no one can blame them.

Rubbish, Zeisig retorted. Just let them get nothing but carrots to eat, they'll soon start asking for Zeisig's bananas again.

They didn't use their tickets for the operetta that night. Operetta is more for the eyes, says Zeisig across the bed to me. I nod. So I let him tell me his story because I need material for a story. Maybe others will turn it into a television play. But story-telling is better, at least you can ask questions if you don't quite believe or understand. A story is something you can really get hold of.

What happened next? The following morning, Zeisig goes on, scarcely had he put up the awning—it was a sunny October day, the heads of the poets and philosophers on their plinths have been washed shining clean by the rain during the night, at their feet the eternal homage of the nation—the following day, then, men in brown shirts tip over Zeisig's stall.

Bananas, apples, cabbages from Dreiskau and Grosspötzschau or Kleinpötzschau roll down, weights and the heavy scales topple over, the whole lot tumbles to the feet of Nicolai Strasse. The city, at nine in the morning, has been turned upside down. The policeman watches, then walks on: ruling party and three kids at home. Jobless men clench their fists in their pockets, says Zeisig, and I'm prepared to believe him. Sticky banana mush clings to his boots. Zeisig stands there motionless.

THAT AFTERNOON there is a work-out at the Isaiah Club. He goes there just to watch, to get his mind off things. He feels weak at the knees whenever he thinks about the morning. But since the last game there is no longer a full team. These two have been taken away in the night. Those two got across the nearest border yesterday. Across the border: only a few did that. The Isaiah Athletic Club now consisted solely of breadwinners: street vendors, furriers, waiters, barbers. Among these Zeisig was considered a rich man. The Banana King. At one time he had wanted to open a delicatessen in Hain Strasse with his savings. Specialities from abroad, the Best from Zeisig, caviar, lobster, melons, walnuts, eel and sturgeon, citrus fruit from Alicante and Tunis. Right across the window, like a banner, the words: THE BANANA KING. Zitrin, a painter-friend of his who drew sports

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personalities for the *Neueste Nachrichten*, choosing his models while watching the game and the rest of the time dreaming of being a great artist—Zitrin would paint a poster for the opening. All palm trees and bananas, and among the palm fronds, discreetly concealed, a few naked girls with the faces of well-known floozies from Grosse Fleischer Gasse. But there was no work-out today. Zitrin and Zeisig would have sat together in the cafeteria, Zitrin smoking a pipe or a small cigar. Looked like a little cigar himself, says Zeisig. They talked. I'm too tired now to listen to what they talked about. I've been lying in bed for weeks. Many similar conversations, I tell myself just before dropping off to sleep, may have taken place later during the war in that cafeteria that was demoted to a shack where Dutch labour-conscripts had their bunks and their cooking utensils and their cake of soap. No, I find out next morning after the doctors' rounds: Zeisig got away. Zeisig survived.

HIS IDEA was contained in two sentences. He dyed his hair blond, and he bought himself a pair of glasses. His friend Zitrin made him a forged passport with the last paper he had left for it. And it became a great work of art that survived the war. Zitrin did not survive. He died in Dachau.

Zeisig told how he locked himself in his apartment. No ringing of the bell would have brought him to the door. He sent his wife to stay with her sister in Annaberg. A parting they could scarcely have found harder to bear had they known that it was to be for twelve years. Ten years, Zeisig corrects me. It was 1935 by then. I had just been born, I said. Odd.

Zeisig, alone at home, dyed his hair according to the instructions left by his wife, adjusted the glasses to his nose and ears, familiarised himself with the particulars and photograph in the new passport (the photo had been retouched by Zitrin), looked in the mirror and called himself *Hans Engelhardt* and was a *manufacturer's agent* by occupation and his distinguishing marks were: *none*. The said Herr Engelhardt turned up at a meeting of the Brown Shirts, on the fourth day of the new existence that had been rehearsed at home, in gesture, in pantomime—a certain agility derived from the related branch of his trade may, I think, have been helpful. (But how did he allay the suspicions of his neighbours? What did his wife tell her sister in Annaberg? The beauty of a story, of course, is that it leaves questions open.) Anyway, he presented the Brown Shirts with the identity card of the Jewish dealer Hans Zeisig, whom he admitted having killed, in self-defence, and—the ink of the Nuremberg Laws of a certain Herr Globke was still damp—without further ado rolled into the River Pleisse, or was it the Elster Canal? The fellows quite understood the plight of the threatened Engelhardt. They handed him on to Party colleagues and officials, who transferred to the Aryan Engelhardt the vacant licence of the itinerant, non-Aryan Zeisig who had suddenly vanished without trace and who meanwhile had been declared missing and possibly even dead by his wife in Annaberg.

Zeisig moved to Gohlis, to a room behind a store, and started a small business in notions: buttons, sewing articles, hair dyes; dolls also repaired. During the war he sold carnival supplies, paper goods, yellow moons with red eyes. Before the war was over, everything burned to ashes. Zeisig got away. This time to Leutzsch or Lindenau.

AND YOUR WIFE? I ask, as we lie in bed waiting for the night and for the recovery that is invisibly advancing in our bloodstreams, according to the doctors.

That was a queer business too, says Zeisig, passing over the reunion in 1945. He tells what happened with the authorities. They were not interested in stories, they needed papers, facts. A Frau Zeisig couldn't also be Frau Engelhardt, so they had to get married again, until certain papers came to light bringing the old truth to light.

The old truth: Zeisig repeats thoughtfully, for, so he conveys as we drink our tea through the spouts of our invalid-cups, so at least he says, in '45, when he no longer needed to pretend to be Engelhardt (who had been pursued in his stationery shop by a rich widow with offers of marriage), he could no longer be Zeisig. In his own mind. That person, although not killed by Engelhardt and rolled into the Pleisse, had nevertheless been wiped out once and for all by the band

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of Korah, the gang that had tipped over his stall and mixed up bananas and cabbages and apples in impossible confusion. A third existence, so Zeisig thought, a third skin would have to grow around him. A new person occupy it. For: while others had been driven, tortured, and burned to death, he had sat warm and snug in his shop. Had that been right? he asked me and tried to look at me, causing a stab of pain in his neck. He had saved his skin, the useless one, he said, so meaningless his game of hide-and-seek, he had saved that bit of life, but what else? He had known nothing about the world in those days, he says today. He had sent his wife away. He had talked his friend in the cafeteria of the Isaiah football club into something.

My reply, when we turn the theme of his life over and over as we lie in bed in the evening, is that, in a time of emergency, saving one's bare life means a lot. A life, I say, is the future saved.

Zeisig did what he could to take on his new life. Surrounded himself with books, went to night school, insisted on passing exams, catching up on his studies. He is sixty-two. His thirst for knowledge persists.

So here I am with a stiff neck, he says. As far as his illness is concerned he is a calculated pessimist: to make me bolster his morale. I must admit I am a poor eulogist. In six months, say the doctors, he will be cured. Zeisig does not forget to write from his bed to his colleagues in the Department of Trade and Commerce, to ensure they do things properly.

Those fellows are all youngsters like yourself, Zeisig tells me over the top of his letter, and asks me for a particular foreign word with which to spice his letter.

If I have to lie here anyway: between 330 and 350 feet above sea level, the same mean annual temperature since 1913 at least, I can think about Zeisig and about the skins a man needs in order to get through life.

Translated by Leila Vennewitz

Dawn over South Florida: February

To mingle with the wind—
I knew the way:
Rollerskating on the edge of frost
Miami mornings when the oranges were cold,
The air a rushing northwest stream
Holier than the Northern snows.
My bones of ice melted in the speed
As I rolled through diamonds, blue and golden dice
Shooting for the setting stars, the sun
Rising on the boy who prayed for snow—
And now the stars have set, the wind has changed,
And rollerskates have rusted in the rain.
The orange sky is sweat. It never snowed.

Larry Rubin

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J. R. L. Anderson

Has Unemployment a Future?

Some Heretical Reflections

AFTER NEARLY THREE DECADES of almost automatic full employment, as war and making good the destruction of war provided work for practically everybody capable of working, long-term unemployment has again started to grow in Britain. The evidence is unmistakable. The monthly figures in themselves do not mean much because they fluctuate wildly as strikes cause lay-offs, but the trend is grimly upwards. The emotive statistic of "over a million people out of work" was passed in February of this year, and although it has declined to just under a million as the summer has brought seasonal jobs, the outlook is not bright. Most serious of all the statistics, the number of men who have been without work for more than a year has doubled in the past four years, from 75,600 in the Spring of 1968 to just over 143,000 in April 1972.

Temporary recession or inflexible trend? Politicians, who have a professional face for these matters, still argue that there is nothing wrong that "expansion" will not cure. In Government eyes, the necessary expansion is just round the corner. To the Opposition, lack of expansion is all the fault of the Government: given a Labour Government in place of the present Conservative administration, the corner will be turned that much sooner. To both, there is simply a corner to be turned. The evidence, however, is against this facile thinking. At some time between four and five years ago (though it is impossible to determine the precise point in time) an absolute diminution in the demand for human labour *as at present organised* in Britain began to make itself felt; and there is nothing to suggest that any of the accepted expansionist remedies, whether applied by Labour or Conservatives, will make much difference to the rising trend of unemployment.

Is not this precisely what Governments ought to expect? All British Governments since the Second World War have trumpeted the need for restructuring and refurbishing British industry, to increase productivity, to enable any given quantity of work to be done progressively by fewer hands. Vast human ingenuity, and a great deal of money, have gone into the devising of processes and techniques to save manpower: is it surprising that manpower has in fact been saved? All the major basic industries show the same pattern—in agriculture, coal, steel, the docks, and hundreds of manufacturing trades, a handful of men using advanced equipment can do work that once required gangs of human labour.

IN THEORY this "releases" labour for other tasks, and in itself makes for the creation of new jobs—maintenance men to look after the advanced machinery, for example. Since machines first appeared to take work from human hands this theory has often worked. The typewriter, which enabled one girl to do the work of half-a-dozen clerks with quill pens, was the forerunner of a whole industry of office machinery. There was suffering among the more elderly of a generation of male clerks; but the world was harsher then, nobody bothered much about them and they soon died off. Their sons did not become clerks, and many of them doubtless found better jobs than clerking. That was once the idea of human progress—suffering for a few, which was a pity but could not be helped, and higher living standards for many. We have changed all that, in many ways mercifully. The redundant clerk nowadays at least gets unemployment benefit, and when that is exhausted he can call on other welfare services to ensure that he does not starve.

But the flow of "released" labour into other jobs, even when such jobs exist, is restricted by a host of relatively new devices. Powerful trade unions try to insist on the continuation of old jobs, or, where this is manifestly impossible,

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demand that the men once needed for the old jobs should all be guaranteed new ones in the same industry and at no loss of pay. Other industries are often the preserves of other trade unions, or even, as in the docks, of different sections of the same union, which do not look kindly on an influx of newcomers who may threaten their own jobs. Since labour-saving techniques cannot readily be uninvented, and life has somehow to go on, real reduction in the demand for human labour is disguised by a variety of uneasy (and expensive) compromises. Levies are imposed and subsidies provided to guarantee pay if not work to those whose unions are strong enough to blackmail the community.

This process has perhaps gone farthest in the coal industry. All the coal that Britain needs could be produced from relatively few pits in the Midlands and Yorkshire, but other coal-fields, now hopelessly uneconomic, are kept going simply to provide employment for coal-miners. The price is a surcharge on all fuels to pay for work that is totally unnecessary, and which the British economy would be substantially stronger without. Fuel policy is distorted in order to protect coal and (to a lesser extent) to provide freight for the railways to haul. Power stations which could produce electricity more economically from oil or natural gas are compelled to burn coal to sustain artificial employment for the miners who get it and for the railwaymen who transport it. The lengths to which this policy is carried can be seen in a huge new power station recently completed at Didcot, in Berkshire. Didcot is about as far from any coal-field or source of sea-borne coal as the geography of England makes possible; yet its power-station is coal-fired. Manufacturing industry is riddled with devices to ensure that two men are paid to do work that could easily enough be done by one. Rigid demarcation rules insist that certain materials or tools may be handled only by men belonging to a particular trade union, and limits are set to the quantity of work that a man may do in a given time, even if he himself wants to do more.

THESE DEVICES cloud the unemployment figures but do nothing to create new economic activity. Rather, they actively inhibit the growth of new economic activity, dispersing the capital that might otherwise promote it in weekly subsidies to men who are not needed on the payroll, and discouraging enterprise in those who enjoy such subsidies. But, although universally accepted as a kind of rent-charge on national life, these measures to disguise unemployment are only partially successful, and they cannot work for ever. Reality is bound to break through in the end. However carefully protected, no industry can be immune for ever from competition with the outside world. If charges for handling cargo in a particular port become prohibitively expensive, shippers will simply stop using that port—as has happened to a considerable extent in London, and which is part of the continuing crisis in the London docks. If other countries can build ships more cheaply, and guarantee delivery dates more reliably, than Britain, the world will simply stop using British shipyards. And so on. In time, therefore, either some redundant manpower has to go or the total labour force in the industry concerned will become redundant as the industry goes bankrupt. So in spite of all the efforts of Governments and unions, of subsidies, of strikes and threats of strikes, the real unemployment figures mount.

THERE IS A WOEFUL AMOUNT of double-think in attitudes towards unemployment. For most of human history, to be able to live without work has been considered the most fortunate lot of man. Work was the curse of Adam, and to be relieved of it was not only counted a blessing but commanded universal respect of the individual so blessed. To be born into, or to achieve, a state of freedom from work was to be secure of admiration as a man master of his own time. You did not need to be rich; it was enough to possess a competence, however modest, which enabled you to survive without being compelled to work for someone else. Every unemployed man in Britain has such a competence now, but as soon as it is called "unemployment" freedom from work is dreaded, resented, hated bitterly. It is an odd manifestation of human discontent that when it is made possible to exist without work the fate of unemployment is regarded as a doom approaching death.

Generals are traditionally accused of wanting to re-fight the battles of their youth instead of meeting the weapons or tactics of a current war. The record of politicians (and of many economists) is infinitely worse. They cling tenaciously to techniques devised by their grandfathers to deal with circumstances that have long ceased to exist; and when (as happens sometimes, though

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not often) a new idea does emerge it is regarded as dangerously novel for at least a generation, and then misapplied. The principle of State Insurance against unemployment, introduced in Britain in 1911, was such a new idea. But it was not intended to meet long-term mass unemployment. It was devised to help workmen in trades particularly subject to ebbs and flows of work, and was limited originally to men engaged in building, shipbuilding, and engineering. After the First World War the scheme was extended, primarily to help ex-Servicemen to settle down, to almost all wage-earners getting up to £5 a week (a substantial wage in 1920). It was still, however, intended to mitigate short spells of unemployment, providing benefit for limited periods only.

When mass industrial unemployment first afflicted Britain after the post-War boom subsided, nobody had any clear idea of what to do. Unemployment on such a scale was unprecedented. The State Insurance scheme, designed to meet short-term unemployment only, could not provide for millions who might be out of work for years. Governments improvised and patched, at first leaving the unemployed who had exhausted their insurance benefit to the mercies of the old Poor Law authorities, later establishing the Unemployment Assistance Board to pay out the pittance that came to be called the dole. The old idea that the workless were fundamentally feckless died hard; rather, it did not die at all, but perpetuated the concept that while it might be proper to preserve an unemployed man and his family from starvation, they must never be permitted to think that the condition of unemployment was in any way to be preferred to the condition of living on virtuously earned wages. Strangely, this concept—still manifest in all the unemployment regulations—has never applied to anything but *enforced* unemployment. The older concept, that a condition of life without work is to be admired, still applies to anyone living on inherited means, and to those lucky enough to gamble successfully on a football pool.

THE GENUINELY FRESH THINKING in the idea of insurance against unemployment in 1911 became so addled in its political application that it has piled dishonesty upon dishonesty. The first of these dishonesties is that insurance against unemployment is much the same as insurance against a broken leg, with an actuarially calculated premium producing a given rate of benefit. Human experience is such that it is possible to estimate fairly accurately how many individuals in 10,000 are likely to break limbs over a given period; and it is then possible to calculate within a reasonable margin of error how much it will cost the individual to insure against the cost of medical treatment, loss of wages, etc. if he or she does happen to break a leg. But no one can forecast the rate or the duration of unemployment five years, ten years, fifteen years ahead. Past guesses have been wildly wrong. When the insurance scheme was extended after the First World War it was calculated, in the boom conditions of 1920, that the rate of unemployment would never exceed 4% of the working population. Within a few years millions of men were out of work. The Act which established the Unemployment Assistance Board in 1934 assumed a rate of unemployment of 16¾%. As A. J. P. Taylor comments in his *English History 1914–1945*: "In fact this rate was never reached again, and workers thus paid to keep the Fund solvent against a day which never came. . . ."

The next, and in many ways more serious, dishonesty is that unemployment is at least partly the individual's own fault. This derives from the comfortable Victorian principle that the poor are poor because they deserve to be, that (if you do not possess inherited means or speculate successfully) you must work, or want—a slogan ("WORK —OR WANT") curiously reintroduced on posters by Sir Stafford Cripps after the Second World War. No one feels that a man who insures his house against fire enjoys any element of charity in the compensation he receives if his dwelling is burned down. Because unemployment insurance is not genuine insurance there is an element of charity, at least of State charity, about it. And it is often the case that a giver of charity in his heart rather despises the recipient of his bounty. Whatever charitable heart may exist in the corporate body of the State does not warm towards the unemployed. The best unemployed man is undoubtedly a dead one, and if he does not conveniently die the next best thing to do with him is to keep him out of the unemployment statistics. If this cannot be achieved he must be made to feel that the sooner he takes himself off the books the better. His long-term benefit must never approach his possible rate of wages, and if his wages when last in a job were low he comes up against what is called officially the "wage stop," which means that the sum of benefits to which he may be entitled must never be allowed to exceed his nominal "wages."

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ALL THESE PALLIATIVES—and it is not to be supposed that they are not valuable palliatives—to unemployment are produced on the assumption that any state of unemployment is a sickness in the national body: to be cured if possible, to be hidden if it cannot readily be cured, and if it can be neither cured nor hidden, to be treated as cheaply as the patient will tolerate.

Some would say that unemployment is not in itself a sickness, but a symptom of some more deep-seated ill within the body politic. Economists have long argued about the causes of this illness. The fashionable diagnosis between the Wars was that unemployment is caused primarily by under-consumption—that men were out of work in the Lancashire cotton industry because not enough other men could afford to buy new shirts (or shirts at all). This theory was politically attractive in that it laid the blame for unemployment on the unequal distribution of wealth in the world. It also made the remedy seem simple; distribute wealth more fairly, give more people more purchasing power, and unemployment would disappear. There was some truth in this theory, but it was at best a half-truth. The heaviest unemployment between the Wars was in the older British industries, built on what were once Britain's main industrial assets—cheap coal and cheap human labour. Exposed abroad to competition from newer industries using labour more economically, and at home to the growing refusal of labour to sell itself cheaply, orders fell off and unemployment followed. When unemployment did disappear with the ending of the 1930s it was not because of any political revolution redistributing wealth; unemployment ended simply because of war.

The Second World War *was* followed by a social revolution in Britain, achieving a marked redistribution of wealth. It was not a violent revolution, but its consequences have gone deep. Wage-earners who, before the War, would have struggled to own a bicycle now run cars as a matter of course. Semi-skilled manual workers in many industrial jobs can earn as much as bank managers. For three decades purchasing power in Britain has been both greater (in absolute terms) and more widely dispersed than at any time in history. Yet unemployment on a profoundly disturbing scale has appeared again.

IT IS NOT EASY TO DISCARD the beliefs on which one was brought up. Just as some old doctors still feel in their hearts that the best treatment for a child with a sniffle is to remove his tonsils, so there are still economists (and still more politicians) to argue that unemployment is still the fault of under-consumption. The argument can be given a fashionable new dress by extending it to what are called the "under-developed countries." Give every peasant in Africa (it is argued) enough money to buy a motor car, and the motor industries will never need to fear recession. Moreover, a redistribution of wealth from the rich, advanced nations to the poorer countries will act as a pump-priming process. Given the purchasing power to afford more motor cars, the under-developed countries will at once want new roads, new bridges, petrol stations. And these will be followed by hotels and tourist industries, all the blessings that we ourselves enjoy, with the added benefit of virtually limitless work for the manufacturing and construction industries.

Again, there is some truth in this. It has, indeed, been recognised by bankers and other hard-faced capitalists for many years that it may often be profitable to lend money—or even to give it—to poorer countries in return for orders for one's own country's goods and services. There are, however, other factors at work. A motor industry is too sophisticated for countries in the early stages of industrial development, but a textile industry is not; and many of Britain's former customers now have flourishing textile industries of their own—industries which actually export textiles to Britain. Nationalism is a heady force, and the first step of independent Governments which have found their feet is to break their former dependence on their old suppliers. World redistribution of wealth may help Britain (and other advanced countries) for a time; but it cannot do so for all time. Indeed, it multiplies the risks. We have seen that technological advances which reduce the need for human labour can to some extent be checked at home by "feather bedding" and other artificial restrictions on the displacement of manpower. Not all countries are as sensitive to the claims of ancient rites and practices in industry. If a machine that enables two men to do the work of five is actually used as it could be used, it will make the competitive position of firms in Britain forced to keep four men on their payroll that much worse.

BUT WORLD REDISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH on a scale vast enough to be of major help in reducing British unemployment is not likely to come about,

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for the writ of the most sympathetic British Government does not run much beyond the Channel. An apparently easier remedy is to concentrate on "expansion." This is a word much used by both major political parties in Britain, but its meaning is unclear. What is to expand, and how? Meaning is commonly confused by the use of homely metaphor. "To give everyone a bigger slice of cake, we must have a larger cake." Obviously. But who is to bake the cake? And are there no limits to the quantity of cake that anybody can eat?

If all families had two cars it would clearly help the motor industry to expand. But what then? Three cars in every garage? (Or rather, since there are not nearly enough garages for existing cars, cars three deep against every kerb.) Two washing machines in every house? Looked at in these terms the thing is absurd. Of course, it is not looked at in quite these terms: a slightly saner form of expansion is to increase the rate of replacement of commonly-used goods. Industry itself is constantly trying to secure this by persuasive advertising. Again, however, if looked at rationally, there are seen to be limits. How often can a car or washing machine or carpet reasonably be replaced? Every three years? Every two years? Every year? Already there is a good deal of suspicion about what is termed "built-in obsolescence"—that is, a deliberate policy by manufacturers to ensure that their products do not last too long. Extending this to acceptance as deliberate national policy would soon make many products not worth buying at all. And unless Britain could be insulated completely from the rest of the world there would be wicked foreigners who would persist in actually making things to last; and the obstinate British public would buy them in preference to goods with instant obsolescence.

I have extended these arguments to absurdity because they *are* absurd. On the near side of absurdity, of course, there is much to be said for them. Widening purchasing power can bring advantages to nearly everybody, and there is a strong moral case for it as well. Accelerating the rate of replacement of commonly-used goods can also confer benefit. It is to the good of all that old bangers should be taken off the road, and if improved domestic appliances can be brought to homes more quickly, so much the better.

My point is simply that none of these policies offers any cure for industrial unemployment.

FOR UNEMPLOYMENT is not a disease. The sickness in the body politic which unemployment is supposed to manifest is not in unemployment, but in attitudes to, and in the treatment of, unemployment. It is as if cancer ceased to exist as an illness, while the fear and treatment of cancer remained a devastating human peril. If mankind's ingenuity and the achievements of all the physical sciences are to be put to use, unemployment as we use the term *must* increase, and go on increasing. If one man at a control-panel can load a ship by pressing a few buttons, why *expect* the continuance of heavy manual work for dockers? Instead of regarding unemployment as some sort of failure by Government, a steady reduction in the human labour needed to sustain a community should, surely, be one of the chief aims of civilised Government. Instead of clouding and trying to hide rising unemployment figures, a sane community would applaud them.

We have it on the authority of St John's Gospel that *logos,* the Word, is the beginning of all things. Modern linguistic philosophy restates this fundamental truth—things are what they are, because we say they are. Call unemployment by a different name, call it *"Freedom from Forced Labour,"* and a wholly different emotional response is at once invoked. How we suffer from Civil Service English! What dark psychosis in some bleak soul conjured the word *"Redundant"* for men displaced by technological advance? It is a dreadful term, calculated to make men feel useless and bitter. Change it to *"Freed",* and instead of fighting to remain at work one might soon find men clamouring for freedom.

The ancient concept that freedom from *having* to work is a human good is surely valid. But to enjoy the freedom that technology makes possible requires vast changes in social thinking. Above all, it requires honest definitions. An unemployed man and his family do not suffer *primarily* because he lacks work; they suffer from lack of money. The man blessed with a secure private income is not generally regarded as suffering any particular hardship. Security of livelihood is the human need, and the resources and ingenuity of the State should be directed towards providing it. Many unemployed men over 50 are unlikely ever to work again. Why not recognise this, and enable any man over 50 who wishes to retire to achieve a dignified retirement? As things are, retirement is often feared almost as much as unemployment, not because men do not want leisure and rest, but

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because they dread the decline in living standards that retirement too often brings. Again, there must be a radical change in attitudes. The man fortunate enough to spend his working life in employment with a good pension scheme—the Civil Service provides a good example—can (and usually does) look forward to retirement. Painlessly, because it is part of his salary-structure, he forgoes part of his earnings throughout his working life to secure a dignified retirement. There are other occupations with good pension schemes, but they remain in a minority, and the age at which pensions become payable is far too high. State retirement pensions, for all the benefits they have conferred on the aged poor, are derisory in relation to wages in industrial employment, and they are not payable at all until the age of 65 for men. The ideal should be retirement at 50, and retirement, not on a pittance, but on an income sufficient to meet all reasonable needs.

FREEDOM FROM WORK at 50 would be an immense human achievement. But, as the demand for manpower decreases, men under 50 will continue to become unemployed. What of them? Again the main need is honesty of approach, to recognise that the *primary* need of such men is not work but money. Often a young or youngish unemployed man could find work, but he does not because it would mean leaving his trade and accepting lower wages than he has been accustomed to (and feels entitled to). I believe in the concept of a National Minimum Wage, not, as it is commonly presented, as a wage at bare subsistence level, but as something nearer the present average of current industrial *earnings* (not wage rates) and I believe that it should be raised as often as possible. Given such a National Minimum, unemployment benefit should be paid at the same figure, but it should not be unconditional. Remember, no one aged over 50 will be unemployed, because he can retire. For younger men, benefit on a scale much the same as their average earnings when they were in work would be paid on condition that they attended training courses or accepted some form of non-military national service.

THIS IS ANOTHER ASPECT OF LIFE on which honest thinking is much needed. At present, when we talk of "unemployment" we mean *industrial* unemployment. Side by side with unemployment and redundancies in industry a vast range of human services are starved of manpower because fewer and fewer people are willing to perform them. Hospital wards close for lack of nurses; the Probation Service is crippled for lack of Probation Officers; hard-pressed mothers, the sick and the aged suffer grievously from the lack of any domestic help. Who can be found nowadays to mend a broken chair? Industry is passionately eager to sell you new vacuum cleaners or washing machines, but heaven help you if you need some small repair. Churchyards are unsightly and overgrown because there is no one to cut grass. The general handyman has disappeared. Yet the *quality* of life as distinct from survival depends enormously on the provision of these and many other services.

Their decline is partly a matter of history, mainly because individual human services are seldom suitable for strong trade union organisation, and so have fallen far behind industry in the rewards they offer. Domestic service—all forms of personal service—are unpopular because they were long abused, and came to be regarded as degrading. Yet, in terms of real value to the community, a nurse, a home-help, a journeyman carpenter are worth far more than many of those who man assembly lines in the motor industry and are paid three or four times as much. Human services *cannot* be performed by machines: it has been well observed that "There is no labour-saving device half as useful as a housemaid". The technology that frees men and women from the manual work of industry could also free them for the services that their fellow men and women (and they themselves) need, and at present cry in vain for. Given new attitudes to personal service, and wages at least the equivalent of those in industry, it will no longer seem degrading. Moreover, if the main human services were organised as National Services, with earnings as high as the best paid jobs in the docks or motor industry, it would not be regarded as demeaning to serve in them. Rather, they would enable many men and women to find a vocation infinitely more satisfying than monotonous work in factories.

The automatic payment of unemployment benefit to school-leavers who cannot find work has nothing to be said for it. In a saner community they would be paid the National Minimum for their age in return for working in some branch of my suggested National Services (including training for such services). Indeed, I should like

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to see two years of some form of National Service restored for all young men and women. National Service in the only sense in which it has ever been tried in Britain was wasteful and unpopular because it was confined to *military* service (which demands volunteers if any service ever does). Even so, it was less unpopular than the political voices raised against it might suggest, and there are many fathers today who wish devoutly—and for good, not Blimpish reasons—that their sons could have a spell in the Army in which they were compelled to serve themselves. Well-organised non-military National Services would have none of the objections raised against old National Service, and could be of incalculable value to the community.

OF COURSE, NONE OF THESE THINGS can even be hoped for without much fresh thinking. Much of the bitterness of unemployment derives from boredom, because few people are educated (or able to educate themselves) for leisure, and without the routine of work feel that they have nothing whatever to do. Again there is the savage old distinction between Gentlemen and Players.

The Gentleman, expected to be able to live without being compelled to work, is educated to *enjoy* using his mind—to read Horace for sheer pleasure, to study archaeology, or botany, or anything else for pure intellectual excitement. The Player—and education regards almost everyone as Players nowadays—is trained rather than educated at all. He may pick up some education if he goes to a university for training; but mostly he will be made to think that education consists in learning to be a physicist, or an accountant, or an engineer; on a lower scale education may consist of learning to be a bricklayer or to operate a capstan lathe. If increasing industrial unemployment is to be regarded as offering increased opportunities of freedom from having to work, education must be completely reoriented to convince the young that there is more in life than acquiring paper qualifications for a job. We hear much of youth's dissatisfaction with the "relevance" of much of what passes for their education. This really expresses what I am trying to say: there is more relevance to life in reading Homer than in memorising engineering formulae or plodding through the dreary wastes required for many a specialist degree.

SOME WILL SAY: All this makes a fine Utopia, but what of the cost? No community could afford retirement at 50, or unemployment benefit at the rate of normal wages.

I am not so sure. There are always excellent reasons to be found for not doing anything, but the costs of the present system are appallingly high. Consider the surcharge on all fuel to keep miners at work in uneconomic and unneeded coal-fields. Consider the hidden costs of the newspaper industry. Consider the hidden costs of overmanning throughout manufacturing industry, and the cost of strikes and Go-Slows to resist redundancies. Transform attitudes to unemployment, take full advantage of technological ingenuity and these hidden costs will disappear. Honesty is still the best, and in the long run usually the most profitable, policy.

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John Mackintosh

Anybody Still for Democracy?

Troubled Reflections of a Westminster M.P.

WITH President Nixon's recent visit to Moscow and with the growth of worries about the internal political health of some Western countries, the old Cold War slogans about the inherent superiority of "the democratic way of life" seem to be less appropriate. And this will be no loss, as they were usually a substitute both for thought and real feeling. But such sloganising was about the only time the West ever emphasised its political system and its beliefs. It is true that throughout the 1950s Western institutions were exported to the former European colonies, but probably only a minority of Left-wing liberals believed that democracy had world-wide value. The departing colonial officials set up elections, courts, and parliaments, partly because they were told to, and partly because they found it hard to think of any coherent alternative. Only when Western observers were confronted by Khrushchev's 1956 revelations to the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party (so vividly confirmed later on in the novels of Solzhenitsyn), by the Berlin Wall of 1961 or by the forcible suppression of Czech socialist freedom in 1968, was there any return to or reflections about the real value of the democratic system.

A symptom of this situation is that today most academics, writers, and politicians would be hard put to it to make a coherent defence of democracy, to explain the theory and distinguish between essentials and mere machinery. It is a curious but well-known fact that the writing of political philosophy has virtually ceased since the Second World War and though student Left-wingers have returned to Marxism or neo-Marxist adaptations, this only emphasises the vacuum in current political thinking and the lack of ideological support for the way in which most of the advanced industrial nations seek to organise their societies.

Indeed the same drift into uncertainty, not on party-political dogmas so much as on the basic principles of social action, has overtaken many contemporary British politicians, most of whom formed their opinions during or not long after the last war. At that time politics, in the sense of how the country should be run and peace preserved, seemed vitally important; and it was taken for granted that these goals could be achieved by Parliamentary means. The heroes of the non-Communist Left were men such as Stafford Cripps or Aneurin Bevan; even rank-and-file MPs were regarded with respect; and the common objective was to retain or win a majority in Parliament. It was in these years that the House of Commons established the National Health Service and nationalised several major industries, so that there was no real fear of a conspiracy of money interests which could upset the result of a general election.

Now many of these attitudes have gone. Even those youthful students who will join a Labour Club shrug their shoulders over the leading members of the British Labour Party; the average MP is used to the public's mild contempt for politicians; and winning a majority in the Commons is not seen as a major step in any direction. The idea that the Parliamentary system can be used to make positive changes in our society has dwindled, not because it is thought that the City or Big Business or Whitehall would deliberately challenge a Left government, but because the House of Commons and both political parties tend to be written off as part of the same rather flabby, immovable, complacent establishment.

ONE SUBJECT ON WHICH democrats did feel a spurt of excitement and renewed commitment after the War was in the late 1950s and early '60s with the rush to independence and self-government in Africa. This was a real vindication of their underlying belief in the rights and dignity of man. It was evidence that without formal education and without the penumbra of a developed industrial society, people still aspired to run their own affairs. Perhaps this sentiment reached its peak in 1958 when Harold Macmillan's Conservative Government put the newly-returned Dr Hastings Banda in prison

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and accused the African Nationalists in Nyasaland of having prepared an elaborate "massacre plot." That venerable and ancient gathering, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, came alive that summer as the missionaries back from Nyasaland, aided by a Left-wing group among the clergy called the "Iona Community", battled with their more conservative or quiescent brethren on the basic issue of whether Africans could be "trusted" and whether they were "fit" to govern themselves. There was much rejoicing when the progressives won, and soon after they were vindicated by the Devlin Report. Since then, as is well known, Dr Banda has exiled his opposition and has become the symbol of collaboration with South Africa.

Those excited by African democracy shifted their admiration first to Kwame Nkrumah and then to Jomo Kenyatta, followed by Kenneth Kaunda and Julius Nyerere. Though *apartheid* remains a major enemy and African self-government still gets the support of liberals and radicals, the Congo fiasco and the Nigerian Civil War, the military coups and the mass deportations throughout Africa have transformed their original enthusiasm into a rather weary realism.

IN BRITAIN ITSELF, the last time there was a mood of reform and renewal was the early 1960s leading up to the 1964 general election. But, in retrospect, though there was a feeling that Britain was "out-of-date" and needed "renovation", the principles on which reconstruction was to be based were not at all clear. It was an eclectic movement, sometimes calling for more Managerial Efficiency, sometimes anticipating unnamed improvements as the result of the application of Technology, while in other cases accepting the need for greater popular control or "Participation." This confusion came out in the somewhat muted call for parliamentary reform, it never being clear whether the objective was more efficiency (*i.e.* rapid action by the executive), or the abolition of medieval parliamentary forms, or increased power for back-benchers in the Commons to watch over the executive.

The kind of doubts held by politicians themselves, by civil servants, and by the interested public about the meaning and value of democracy were, however, fairly evident. A small but revealing example is the belated reform of the Health Service which eventually emerged in 1972. When the Service was being set up in 1947–8, many hospitals were owned and managed by the local-elected borough and county councils. It was then argued that these units were "too small" to run a proper Health Service, and so the hospitals were taken away from the local authorities and placed under the control of a number of nominated regional hospital boards. The Conservative Party, in Opposition at the time, said it was quite wrong to give this kind of responsibility (including the power to allocate and spend so much public money) to non-elected bodies, and it proposed that the members should be elected. Aneurin Bevan resisted this on the ground that he was establishing a national (if somewhat de-centralised) service for which the Minister was responsible and could be questioned and controlled by the House of Commons. In fact, while this has been true of the overall policies of the Health Service, in their own regions the boards have been largely laws unto themselves.

So, when in the late 1960s the reform of local government was proposed—the new units being larger authorities of almost exactly the same size as the regional hospital boards—it seemed as though a return to an element of democratic control in the Health Service would be possible; a united Health Service in each region could be made the responsibility of the new, elected councils.

But first the Labour Government, and then its Conservative successors, decided on exactly the opposite course of action. Newly nominated area Health boards were to be created, but instead of being under the control of the elected councils, they were to be on their own; and what remained of the local authority Health Services—the Medical Officers of Health, District Nurses, School Health Service etc.—was to be taken away from the elected Councils and given to these *ad hoc* boards which would be, for practical purposes, under the control of the medical profession.

Why did this happen? Part of the reason was the deep distrust of both the senior civil service and MPs for local elected councils. A major influence was the pressure of the medical profession who detested the idea of explaining their proposals and adjusting their priorities to meet the demands of elected representatives. They argued that, while it was entirely proper to have the educational service controlled by councillors, it would be quite improper to have the same arrangement for the Health Service, a view which suggests that the allocation of priorities in health is purely a matter of professional expertise. In fact the same value-judgments and essentially political decisions are involved as in any other allocation of resources among different sectors of the community.

If democratic procedures are regarded with this degree of doubt or suspicion in Britain today,

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where did the original belief come from and what precisely did it amount to?

IN POLITICAL TERMS, the basic step towards democracy was the Reform Act of 1867 which enfranchised all urban male householders. The serious debate which led to this result was begun in 1864 by Gladstone. When contemplating the refusal of the Lancashire mill workers to turn against the anti-slavery cause despite the unemployment produced by the North's blockade of the South during the American Civil War, he asked:

> What are the questions that fit a man for the exercise of a privilege such as the franchise? Self-command, self-control, respect for order, patience under suffering, confidence in the law, regard for superiors; and when, I should like to ask, were all these great qualities exhibited in a manner more signal, even more illustrious, than in the conduct of the general body of the operatives of Lancashire?

Soon afterwards Gladstone began to put the proposition in the negative and to ask: on what grounds could it ever be right to exclude a man from the franchise? He concluded that a share, however small, in political power meant that each individual was able to take sides in the great issues of the day, and that these were essentially moral questions. Gladstone's deep religious views left him in no doubt that each individual was responsible for his own moral judgments, and therefore no one could claim that their superior education, or property, made them fit to take these decisions for other people. It was this line of reasoning which found such a response among industrious working men, steeped in non-conformist religion. The remark that was said to have "set the Thames on fire" was Gladstone's comment

> that every man who is not presumably incapacitated by some consideration of personal unfitness or of political danger is morally entitled to come within the pale of the constitution.

His strongest opponent was Robert Lowe, later Lord Sherbrooke. Lowe referred to John Stuart Mill who (in 1865, he said) spoke

> of every citizen of a State having a perfect right to share in its government" and pointed out that such an argument "appeals to some *a priori* considerations. . . . But where are those *a priori* rights to be found? . . . If they do in reality exist, they are as much the property of the Australian savage and the Hottentot of the Cape as of the educated and refined Englishman.

But not all Englishmen were educated and refined. He asked his fellow MPs:

> Let any gentleman consider the constituencies he has had the honour to be concerned with. If you want venality, if you want ignorance, if you want drunkenness and facility for being intimidated . . . if . . . you want impulsive, unreflecting and violent people, where do you look for them in the constituencies? Do you go to the top or to the bottom?

There followed the clear conclusion:

> Once give the men votes, and the machinery is ready to launch these votes in one compact mass upon the institutions and property of this country.

THESE EXTRACTS COME from different speeches but in the dispute between Gladstone, Bright, and Mill on the one hand, and Robert Lowe on the other, the underlying issue was clearly revealed. If government is a matter of *technique and expertise,* then some people are bound to know more and be better able to comment than others. If, on the other hand, the main political decisions are *value-judgments,* then no man can take this kind of decision for his neighbour. Gladstone would not for a moment have said that one person is no more likely to be right than the next, for he believed profoundly that there was one truth, one proper course of action in each situation, but that every individual is responsible for seeking this truth; the obligation to do so cannot be confined merely to those with titles, property, or education.

THESE VIEWS WOULD SEEM radical even today; and, in the sense that they reveal an equal respect for each individual, they are. But this doctrine has to be added on to the rest of the views and practices that Gladstone and his Liberal followers took for granted. Thus there was no suggestion that every working man was equally competent to govern, or equally competent to pronounce upon complicated matters. It was the task of leaders to explain and to administer, to bring out the salient value-judgments at stake, and then it was the electors' duty to give their verdict.

Such political doctrines implied clear rules both for leaders and for the public at large. It was quite immoral, Gladstone thought, for a politician to go looking for issues, to go constructing programmes. His task was to explain how the government should be conducted and if injustices became apparent, he should explain how they should be remedied. If the electorate agreed, they would support him. If not, there could be no question of altering his views to win votes. Time and the follies (or successes) of his opponents would reveal who was right. And, of course, the electorate could make a wrong decision—after all, had they not once given Disraeli a majority?—but, in the end, truth must triumph.

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History showed zig-zags but also a discernible progress towards truth so that the politicians who said "what was right" were bound to win in "the long run." In politics, as in private life, virtue brought the appropriate rewards.

IT WAS ON THESE VERY SIMPLE moral ideas and optimistic assumptions that British democracy was based. The result was being a steady extension of the franchise; the democratisation of local government; the foundation of the Labour Party; and the first suggestions that, in addition to the Irish, even Hindus and Hottentots would eventually be entitled to self-government.

Then came a series of blows to the optimistic assumptions, of which the worst were the 1914–18 War, the rise of Fascism and the drift of communism into totalitarian tyranny. In addition, democratic methods were abused: referenda led to a pseudo-populism, and the mass media could be manipulated to bolster evil régimes. While none of this actually invalidated democracy and no alternative political system suitable for Britain has been suggested, the total effect has been to weaken any positive belief. In the last twenty years, and there can be no denying it, confusion and apathy and disillusion have crept in. The old democratic maxims remain; but, because there is little real vigour behind them, they do not appear as a coherent body of thought.

ONE CONFUSION OR CORRUPTION of democratic theory that has become common is the assertion that Majorities are Always Right. A Fleet Street advertising slogan insists: *"A paper with five million readers cannot be wrong"*. There is a fond illusion that a general meeting of students, or the annual conference of a political party, must always produce the correct policy proposals.

In any attempt to sort out the essence of the theory, it is first necessary to ask: Which majority is entitled to speak on what issue? As a candidate for the rectorship of a Scottish University—a post representing the students on the University court—I was asked repeatedly if I would always accept the majority opinion. This turned out to be the views of a majority of that minority of students which came to a general meeting. There are 11,000 at this university, and general meetings rarely reached 1000. In any case, on issues of university policy, the academic staff are also part of the community affected; the money comes largely from the general taxpayer; and should these groups not be reckoned as part of the constituency from which a majority should be drawn?

Another example has arisen recently where Mr Dick Taverne has been asked to stand down as Labour MP for Lincoln. He was rejected by a majority of the constituency management committee. But he claims (as did Nigel Nicolson, the Conservative MP who was similarly dismissed by his Bournemouth Constituency Party) that a majority of Labour Party members, a majority of Labour voters, and a majority of all voters in Lincoln would prefer to retain him.

Thus the same issue can often be decided in different ways, not on the merits of the case but by asserting that a "majority" is entitled to have its way, and then by arranging the constituency so that the appropriate majority is created. For instance, should the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the British Army be denied entry to the Bogside and Creggan areas of Londonderry? A majority in the Catholic enclave says "Yes"—a majority in Northern Ireland says "No"—a majority in a United Ireland would say "Yes"—a majority in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland would say "No"....

The point of my illustrations is that an issue cannot alter from being right or wrong simply because the group consulted is changed. Clearly, in certain cases, some groups are *more* entitled to consideration for their views, and on some matters the support of those "closely concerned" is necessary. But none of this is a substitute for a decision on the merits of the issue, and the founding fathers of British democracy would have concentrated far more on the issue itself than on manipulating the constituency in order to get the answer that they wanted. Basically, they would have believed that when "the facts" were established and the "moral issues" at stake clarified by extensive debate, then there should be only one correct answer and it would be the duty of political leaders to win support for this conclusion whatever the composition or extent of the audience being consulted.

A FURTHER DIFFICULTY connected with the assumption that the Majority is always right is: What kind of issue should be presented for popular decision and what is the appropriate machinery? It has often been contended that it is proper to settle the allocation of a disputed territorial area by conducting a plebiscite. The reasons for advocating this method are that the outcome touches the life of every individual and that, in most border areas, the issue at stake is something the people involved have "lived with all their lives" and on which they are therefore "well informed." So the inhabitants of the Saarland—or Fermanagh & Tyrone—could properly be asked whether they wanted to be a part of France or of Germany—or whether they wished to belong to Northern Ireland or to Eire.

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But it is worth remembering that, in both these cases, there was no elected legislative body which fitted the exact area and which could be consulted. The same would be true of the consultation of the African population of Rhodesia (recently carried out by the Pearce Commission). The older variety of democrats always preferred to consult elected representatives, if at all possible. They recoiled from the kind of "government by referendum" now advocated by some exponents of popular participation.

The reason was *not* fear of public opinion. It was because governmental decisions can rarely, if ever, be reduced to simple *Yes/No* answers. It is not just the problem of framing the question and of avoiding what is called "the band-wagon effect", though this is, nevertheless, a grievous difficulty. For example, on the issue of whether a referendum was desirable on Britain's entry into the E.E.C., the question likely to get the biggest percentage of "*Yes*" answers is:

> Before taking their final decision about joining the Common Market, Norway, Denmark and Ireland will each have a referendum in which all the people will be able to say whether they want to join or not. Do you think that Britain should do the same?

While this question would almost certainly produce the desired result, the way of putting it which would be as likely to produce the *opposite result* from the same respondents would be:

> 'When France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg and Holland decided to form the Common Market, they each left the decision entirely to their Parliaments. Do you think Britain should do the same?'

In addition to the difficulty of framing a neutral question, there is the much deeper problem of explaining or asking for a decision on all the consequences. For example, not to join the E.E.C. would leave the government of Britain to pursue its economic and political objectives as part of a changing Commonwealth (and with the E.E.C. developing on its own Continental lines). On the other hand, to join would mean such alterations in the context and methods of British politics and administration that a single question (or even a "depth interview") could not encompass the situation, even assuming the respondent was fully informed on all the details. In contrast to this, if the decision is left to the political leaders of the country, they have to live with their judgments, to work them out in all their ramifications and then they have to ask the public something on which voters can give a judgment—has the total result been beneficial? This is why the pioneering democratic thinkers in Britain always preferred to emphasise that decisions came from the Government supervised by the legislature, and that both of these were ultimately responsible to the electorate. They never seriously contemplated the proposition that individual governmental decisions were to be taken directly by the voters.

LASTLY, on the issue of majority rule, there is the question of what is meant by saying that a majority is "always" right. Although the 19th-century democrats fought to extend the numbers entitled to vote, they were clear in their reservations on this point. They also believed in the "rights of individuals" and of "minorities", and realised that majorities could be dictatorial and oppressive. Since then there have been many tragic cases to prove this. The way the Americans treated U.S. citizens of Japanese descent during the Second World War is a depressing example. And legislatures representing majority opinion can also be oppressive and remove individual rights—as the British Parliament did when it passed the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Bill and denied British passport holders of Asian origin the right to enter this country.

Nor is this all. On matters of policy, as well as on questions of minority rights, majorities can be wrong. It is not merely that there has been support for aggressive military actions—a majority of Germans probably supported Hitler from 1934 till the tide of the War began to turn in 1942—a majority of the British electorate probably supported the invasion of Suez in 1956. Majorities can also be wrong about the ways of achieving acceptable objectives. The desire to avoid another World War in the 1930s was entirely laudable; but it is almost certain that a majority of the electorate supported the Appeasement policy and, in particular, the Munich settlement, though in retrospect they were probably wrong in thinking this "the best way of maintaining peace". What is much more common, and more difficult to resolve in terms of domestic policies, is when the same majority wants incompatible objectives. Thus, it is probably the case that a majority of trade-unionists are opposed both to a government-enforced Incomes policy *and* to run-away Inflation.

ALL THESE LIMITATIONS on the maxim that a Majority Must Be Right can be made tolerable if the majority operates through an elected assembly. This process encourages a certain level of debate and recognition of minorities and their rights. It affords time for the electorate to assess the total impact of policies and the motives and capacities of the competing politicians. If, after all this (as may happen), the electorate takes the wrong decision, provided there is a vigorous political dialogue, the voters must in time get

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closer to the truth by rejecting leaders who have failed to provide adequate solutions, either through incompetence, errors of judgment, or through unacceptable values.

THERE IS another confusion—or corruption—of democratic ideas, and it has to do with the propriety of defying laws or using force "in certain circumstances". There is, at first, an apparent contradiction between saying that majorities are always right and then arguing that force or law-breaking could be permissible, since presumably a majority in a democratic system can get the laws it wants.

Consider the advocates of Sit-ins or Strikes in breach of established procedures, of refusals by local authorities to comply with laws they do not like (*e.g.* on school milk, or rent increases) or of the resort to force in Northern Ireland. One argument is that there *is* an appropriate majority for change but that those in control are so "deeply entrenched" that only physical force will extract any concession. A variant is the allegation that democratic procedures are "so slow" that the majority can only lose heart unless a quick demonstration of their feelings produces instant victory.

Then too: we hear that the "wrong" majority has been consulted. If there was one issue that the Conservatives stressed at the 1970 election, it was the need for a reform of Industrial Relations. But the trade-unionists who advocate resistance to the subsequent Act of Parliament have argued that it was unacceptable to a majority of their members, thus appealing from the whole electorate to one minority group involved.

A third version is the suggestion that a majority is in fact in potential agreement—but this is not explicit because the public are not "aware of the facts" or have not "concentrated" on the issue—so that some sort of intervention with their lives (*e.g.* blocking the roads leading to an airport, or a lightning strike on commuter trains) is necessary in order to bring the matter home to the majority who will then, it is alleged, demonstrate their true support.

Only a few of those advocating force are prepared to say that they do not really care what the majority think, that they will persist in disrupting the community in order to get their demands accepted—not on their merits, but simply out of fear of the consequent disorders. The shining example of this approach is the I.R.A. But even in this case, many of the I.R.A Provisionals would claim that they were appealing to or serving the cause of a "future majority" in a United Ireland. Now it is clear that in accepting a cease-fire, they have bowed to the will of the present majority in the Catholic areas.

IF IT COULD BE ESTABLISHED that a deep-seated wish of the electorate in Britain could not be achieved after a period when both parties had been in Parliamentary office, then one of the assumptions of the supporters of a democratic system would be seriously challenged. It must be stressed, however, that the desire or objective in question must be attainable. There is no point in the British electorate returning governments to power which promise to put this country back into (say) the "super-Power class", if our size and resources as a nation make this impossible. It is no use voting for parties which promise to "double the standard of living" if the economy cannot conceivably produce this quantity of wealth. The check—for democrats—is that prior discernment (or subsequent disillusionment) among the electors should lead to the rejection of those who make such utopian promises. But if *attainable* objectives are withheld from the electorate by some "conspiracy" of those with special access to power, then the democratic system can indeed be judged a failure. In such a situation the use of force could be justified.

There is, however, no evidence at all that this has happened. The examples cited where "nothing has been done" are usually cases where a real and effective majority has been objecting to the proposed course of action. In situations where the policy is reasonable and there is adequate popular support but the existing machinery is very slow (or, as with the early claims for "student representation", there often was no machinery), the use of force nevertheless is hostile to the whole philosophy on which democracy is based.

For two reasons. The first is that force is a substitute for rational argument and assumes that a good case cannot win on its merits. It also disarms those with a good case when they encounter superior force. I have heard students say that there is "no point" in establishing their case on rational grounds, and they have proceeded to organise a sit-in. But what answer have they had when a strong-arm squad ejected them?

The second reason is that one of the grounds for adopting democratic procedures is the atmosphere—the methods—the humane attitude to other people—which it induces. To proceed by discussion, through an elected assembly which accepts the possibility of rejection by the electorate, means a respect for the views of one's opponents. How can one create a society which has a regard for individual rights and for the day-to-day well-being of its members when one goes in for terror or riot or even a little rough "manipulation"?

A university was designed to cultivate free inquiry and the pursuit of truth—how can it thrive if, at any moment, a disagreement between

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The Irish Disaster

MR JOHN P. MACKINTOSH *(Berwick and East Lothian): It is with some temerity that Members with English or Scottish constituencies take part in this debate but I am encouraged to do so having listened to the speech made by the hon. Lady the Member for Mid-Ulster (Miss Devlin). She said that anybody who does not come from Northern Ireland cannot understand the situation there. I sometimes think when I go to Belfast and even to Dublin, particularly to Northern Ireland, that it is only those who come from outside who can properly comment on recent events in Northern Ireland.*

I speak as one who went across originally in sympathy with the civil rights movement and who listed the categories of discriminations practised against the minority. I remember studying discrimination in local government, housing and employment. The discrimination meant, as the hon. Lady said, that one community was living on the backs of the other community in Northern Ireland. I remember adding these discriminations together and discussing the political solutions. But I must tell the House that at that time and today I do not think that the total list of discriminations is worth the death of one single individual. Indeed, it is not worth the broken leg of one person. When I think of the conditions in which the Catholic minority, or whatever one cares to call them, is living in Northern Ireland, I think that it adds up to a fine standard of living compared with that of many other people in the world. Considering these difficulties and discrimination, what we want to see is fairness and justice but not at the cost of any of the atrocities which are being committed today.

ONE HAS TO ENGAGE *in a psychological exercise to understand how fear has built upon fear until people are prepared to destroy the very area in which they live simply because they are further down the housing list than somebody else or fail to get a better job. This is not the way to achieve one's goal. There is clearly a deep rooted fear which goes to the very ethos of life of people in the community and we must somehow get round it.*

I originally supported the views of the minority in Northern Ireland and advocated the necessary reforms. I hoped that the O'Neill experiment would come through and it did not. I supported the civil rights movement and the results of its activity began to appear in a reform programme announced by the Stormont Government, though it was largely forced through by governmental pressure from this country. These reforms still did not have the effect we wanted in winning back the confidence of the minority community in Northern Ireland and I then accepted the argument that some major gesture was needed to show that what we were trying to do was genuine. We tried to show that we were forcing these reforms through in the name of a better community life between the sectors of the population. . . .

I regret that the idea of direct rule came one and possibly two years too late. I am not saying that it has now come too late but it would have had more impact if it had come sooner; it would then perhaps have been possible to win the minority community's confidence. . . .

WHAT IS THE CORE *of a political solution? The core must be either to get meaningful negotiations with the leaders of the IRA, the Provisional leaders of the Catholic community or, if that is impossible, to separate these people from the bulk of the people who they say they are leading. It is regrettable that negotiation with the Provisional IRA has proved to be impossible. The reason it is impossible is that they do not just want reform in Northern Ireland or the abolition of Stormont. Their basic condition for peace in Northern Ireland is a change in the situation which could never be conceded by the British Government because it would have to be imposed on the people of Northern Ireland by British forces. This solution, the unification of Ireland, will not be accepted by the million majority in Northern Ireland, nor could it be enforced by the Government of their Republic because they have neither the will nor the strength to do it.*

We cannot give terms to a minority which involve British coercion of the majority and which will transform one kind of civil war into another kind of civil war. If these are the terms for which the IRA is asking as a political solution, then it is impossible.

If that is the situation there is only one political solution left. It is that somehow one must separate the majority of the Catholic community, who I believe do not want revolutionary socialism nor do they want incorporation in the Republic. I think they want to live in confidence, peace and justice in Northern Ireland as do the supporters of the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley). If such a political solution is possible, I will support the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in everything he does to try to achieve it. But I have a deep fear that it will not prove possible to make this separation between the IRA and the Catholic community or to find among them an alternative leadership.

I feel agonised with every death I hear about in Northern Ireland and anybody who has gone through the ruin and rubble of Belfast must feel the same.

LET US BE CLEAR *that if we cannot separate the IRA from the Catholic community we must say to the Catholic community that there are two possibilities. One is civil war; that is, some version of the idea of pulling out the Army and letting the majority assert itself and take its own retribution on the minority. But no one would advocate this. It would be a disaster. It would be terrible. But one day it may come about if the present state of affairs persists.*

The alternative, at which the right hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland hinted, is the Sudetenland policy, the cession of border Catholic areas to the Republic and telling those in the minority community in Belfast and in the interior of the North that if they are not prepared to allow normal life to become

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a professor and a faction of students is settled by the shouting of slogans? In industry, factory relationships which offer an element of security and respect for the workers cannot be created if negotiations are likely at any time to give way to disruption and confrontations based on force. It is true that members of the minority (Catholic) community in Northern Ireland had to wait rather longer for housing, and often got less well-paid jobs, than members of the majority (Protestant) community. But the kind of social situation in which both groups can receive equal treatment and live free and satisfactory lives is made less likely so long as recourse to violence is considered legitimate, "progressive", useful. On all this, Gladstone, Bright, Mill and their followers were both clear and correct. Since the argument for democracy was based on the right of each person to make their own moral judgments, the machinery of democracy had to be operated in a manner which confirmed and supported these rights; and any short-cuts to policy objectives desired by the electorate, which involved the undermining of these rights, damaged rather than enhanced both the cause of democracy and the well-being of the community.

ONE LAST CONFUSION and corruption of the older theories of democracy occurs over the question of leadership. Nowadays the word itself seems to have an odious connotation. It is the habit of many advocates of "popular participation" to turn on anyone who suggests that political leadership requires training, or skill, or experience, and to denigrate them as "élitists."

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possible, they must leave. This Sudetenland, or Polish corridor, policy is appalling in its brutality, its cruelty and its destruction of property rights and established patterns of life. But there will come a point where the escalation of the present horrors will pass the horrors of this possible policy, at which point therefore it will become realistic.

We must break through and point out that those of us who supported the claims of the minority in Northern Ireland to justice, fair dealing, an end to discrimination, and an end to a political regime loaded against them, that we shall not support them to the length of denying that the majority also have rights and that we shall support those rights in that we cannot see civilised life in Northern Ireland totally destroyed.

The minority must appreciate that they have to break loose of IRA leadership or the consequences will be too appalling for anyone, including them, to imagine.

HANSARD,
Parliamentary Debate, 24 July, 1972

The merest hint that any MP knows a little more about government than the man-in-the-street is scoffed at as an arrogant assumption of middle-class intellectuals.

It is, as has been said, correct that when the franchise was being extended, those favouring democracy argued that each citizen was entitled to "pass judgment" on the conduct of the politicians. But it was never held that each voter knew as much about the technicalities of government as Messrs Gladstone and Disraeli. And the electorate today are still prepared to respect expertise in certain fields, *viz.* in medicine, the law, science or technology. So much is this the case that (as over the structure of the new Area Health Boards), they are prepared to overlook the essentially political questions of how much is spent on health and whether services for the elderly get priority over heart transplant experiments, and so on.

I would be prepared to argue that much local and national administration requires skill and experience as hard to acquire as the expertise of the surgeon or the scientist. The public are right to press politicians and officials to explain their policies. The answer that it is "too complicated" for the voter to understand is properly resented; but, on the other hand, it should be appreciated that to press for *accountability* and *open government* is not to suggest that ministers do not face problems as or more difficult than those encountered by, say, the managing directors of multi-national companies.

It is, rather, to stress that being in public life adds to the need for expertise in management and in diplomacy, the further expertise of communication. Nor does this mean the ability to sell superficial explanations, or to curry favour with the voters, or simply to say what people want to hear. Gladstone explained his budgets and his objections to Conservative Near-Eastern policy in long speeches of infinite complexity, making no concessions to those of inferior stamina or intellect (this was a great mark of respect for his fellow men). If the public did not like what he had to say, his answer was not to "trim" in order to hold his party together (Gladstone split his on Home Rule for Ireland), or in order to win an election. The politician ought to persist in saying what he believed to be correct until either he disappeared from public life or the voters realised that he was right and finally rallied to his support.

The idea current in certain political circles today that an MP who has strong views and retains them when they are unpopular is guilty of "arrogance . . . élitism . . . and undemocratic behaviour" would have been quite incomprehensible to the originators of the democratic doctrine in England. Democracy was based on

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the quest for truth by the leaders and the allocation of support by the electorate. After all, the opposite position—attributed to an American local politician who said: "These are my views, ladies and gentlemen, and if you do not like them, I will change them"—would make parties and elections and debate unnecessary. A country's leaders could simply adapt their views to the results of the latest opinion polls. Yet the *Tribune* group on the Left of the Labour Party consider that Labour MPs should give a prior undertaking to follow the decisions of the annual conference of the Labour Party whatever these may be and whatever the MP himself believes. Alas, this is an attitude which is widespread. I have mentioned the contested election for Rector of a Scottish University, because, though a Labour MP, I had voted for British entry to the Common Market, and I was asked by students whether I would promise never to exercise my own judgment in this way again but always simply to reflect the opinion of (I think it was) the last general meeting of students.

THERE IS TALK on the Left just now as to whether the Labour Party should be a "socialist" or a "social democratic" Party. If the latter term means that in addition to propounding a policy of social change, the Party ought to rethink and reaffirm its democratic philosophy and give its attention to preaching the meaning and virtue of democratic politics, the time is clearly overdue. But surely the necessity for such thought and action spreads far beyond the confines of one party.

It is, I fear, basically unhealthy for a country to depend on a political system which is not backed by positive conviction and understanding, and whose original principles have become corrupted and confused. At present I fear they lack coherence and the power to win and retain the support of new generations.

Summer Ghosts

We are the small ghosts of summer,
Eavesdroppers on the chit-chat of her clouds:

Our faces enigmatic as folded maps,
Our bodies a mere thickening of sunlight.

Butterfly hands hovering, mating,
Smiles haunting the stiff green wheat.

Air smooths our voices into new textures;
Grass keeps no memento of our impress.

We procreate our deepest solitudes,
Scan the eyes' horizons for a sign.

Harvests intensify: a sense of gold.
How may two ghosts ripen into substance?

Peter Scupham

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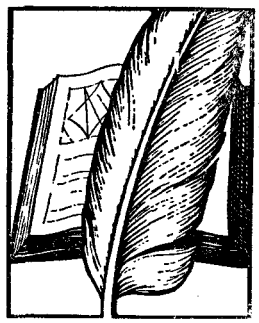

Column

SHORTLY BEFORE he died last spring, Nicola Chiaromonte published a short book, *The Paradox of History*, in which he examined the ideas which certain novelists—Stendhal, Tolstoy, Jules Romains, Malraux, Pasternak—have had about the meaning of history, and in particular about history at its most violent, that is, about war and revolution. The reason, he said, why he took novelists, not historians, as his point of departure was that

> in every important work of fiction we find, implicit or explicit, well amalgamated with the narrative or clumsily appended to it, a definite structure of ideas. There is no modern novel of any scope that does not imply a certain view of society, of history, of the world.

Or as Balzac said about the novelist: "It is not enough to be a man, one must be a system."

How glad Chiaromonte would have been to have had the opportunity of adding Solzhenitsyn to the writers whom he took under consideration; not only because he challenges comparison with any of them but because, in *August 1914*,[1] he so clearly exhibits that "definite structure of ideas," that "view of society, of history, of the world," which Chiaromonte regarded as so essential a part of a novelist's equipment. And perhaps this is not surprising, because Solzhenitsyn has told us that the series of novels of which this is the first has long been "the chief artistic design of my life," which has obsessed him ever since he first formed the ambition of becoming a writer.

The subject of this design is to be the birth of modern Russia, but what this novel is about is the death of the old. The greater part of it is a meticulously detailed account of the catastrophic defeat by the Germans of the Russian Second Army at the Battle of Tannenberg and of the five days, from 26 August to 30 August 1914, which the battle took to run its course. Solzhenitsyn's account has the lucidity of a military textbook; yet at the same time it has a depth and complexity, a multiplicity of perspectives, which admirably convey the chaos and confusion of any great battle as seen from the point of view of those who actively participate in it. The fog of war that covers every battlefield has never been better described; the sense of confusion, of bewilderment, of meaningless action, is heightened by the screen sequences which Solzhenitsyn has interpolated into the narrative, a series of vivid and violent images which blind and deafen us just as war itself does. But battles are not only fought on a physical plane; they are fought in the minds of men. It is through the minds of his characters that Solzhenitsyn brings the battle to life, and it is this which makes him a novelist as well as an historian.

GENERAL FULLER SAYS of Tannenberg that it had no decisive influence on World War I; in Solzhenitsyn's view the five days of the battle were decisive in that they sealed the doom of Imperial Russia. Thus they formed the last act of one great historical drama and the first of another, to be enacted in the later volumes of this vast novel.

There is, of course, a school of history (and indeed of novelists, though none of them of any distinction) which will regard Solzhenitsyn's view of Tannenberg as irredeemably, even criminally, false. It is a school which monopolises the writing of history in Solzhenitsyn's own country, and issues the metaphysical directives to which its novelists are required to conform. In this view, *August 1914* will only multiply all the intellectual, literary and political sins for which Solzhenitsyn has already been condemned. For, after all, a battle like Tannenberg is only a minor episode in a stream of events whose course has already been determined by quite different causes. Battles, however dramatic, even tragic, they may seem to a superficial or a poetic eye, are only the spume thrown up by the great sea of history, whose ebb and flow, however, is unaffected by such superficial events. Novelists may tell you otherwise; but scientific historians know best.

Solzhenitsyn will have nothing to do with all this; any more than he will with Tolstoy's belief that history is determined by a mysterious power, Luck or Chance or Destiny, which is utterly indifferent to the aims or intentions of its human agents, or with Stendhal's that the only truth about a battle is that it is not in the least like what everyone imagines it to be. For Solzhenitsyn, history is quite simply made by men, as individuals and in groups, and a sufficiently scrupulous and imaginative mind can understand how they made it. It is men who decide the issue of battles, and in doing so they also decide the conditions of their own future. It is we ourselves who determine our fate and history is a record of events which might conceivably have been different if we had thought or behaved otherwise than we did. History is not only what actually happened; it is also a history of might-have-beens.

[1] *August 1914*. By ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN. Translated by MICHAEL GLENNY. The Bodley Head, £3.00.

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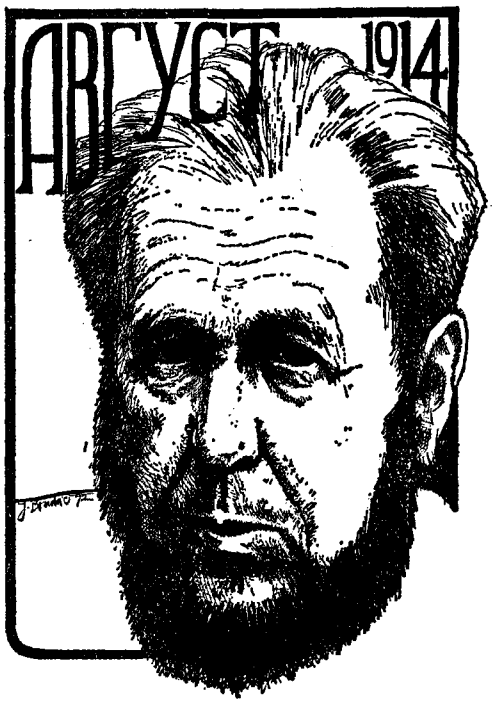
It is worth noticing that in this Solzhenitsyn is much closer to the ordinary man than to those who have pretended to turn history into a science or into a plaything for powers which are totally external to human affairs. For it emphasises once again how involved Solzhenitsyn is, despite (or perhaps because of) his great intellectual and literary gifts, his power of imagination, his passionate ethical and religious preoccupations, with that common humanity which provides the novelist with his basic material. His gifts serve, not to divide him from his fellow men but to bring him into deeper and closer touch with them; indeed he seems somehow to raise them to his own level and this is one of the reasons why he has the power to interest and move us as few contemporary novelists can.



This, then, is, as Balzac would say, the "system" which Solzhenitsyn applies to the battle of Tannenberg, that is to say, a single historical event which directly involved nearly half-a-million men and indirectly millions of others. To do so, he has to exercise a principle of selection, and the novel is largely composed of a a succession of battle scenes, at the level of army group, army, corps, division, in the course of which we come to know an immense cloud of witnesses, from the Commander-in-Chief, the Grand Duke Nikolas Nikolayevitch, the Tsar's uncle, down to the anonymous group of soldiers who carry the dead body of their colonel on the long march back from the scene of their defeat so that he may be buried on the soil of Holy Russia. As such, the novel might easily have degenerated into a mere panorama, though even so it would have been remarkable; it is given unity, however, because each of these scenes has its part to play in the working out, or the failure, of the plans of the opposing armies. It is given a different kind of unity also, on as it were a moral plane, because each incident is a demonstration of the principle that it is ourselves who decide our own fate, both as individuals, and as members of a platoon, a division, an army or a nation.

THIS IS BORNE IN UPON US all the more because, superficially at least, the events which Solzhenitsyn describes seem to demonstrate exactly the opposite. For what body of men could have been more clearly foredoomed to defeat and destruction than General Samsonov's wretched Second Army?—inferior to the enemy in every material respect except numbers; in training, in equipment, in communications, in transport, but even more in the decisive factor provided by effective and intelligent leadership at the higher level of command. Under such conditions, the Second Army stumbled forward as if blindfolded into a sandy waste of forests, lakes and marshes against an enemy which had brought the science of war to perhaps the highest pitch of perfection that it has ever achieved. Science is here the operative word, for it was in the technical and technological aspects of war that the Germanmilitarymachine was supreme and the Russian almost totally deficient.

And in the event, indeed, defeat in this unequal contest could not be averted. Yet again and again Solzhenitsyn reminds us that wherever the human will asserts itself it is capable of overcoming the most adverse circumstances, and that wherever the courage and endurance of the Russian soldiers found officers capable of directing them with intelligence and determination, it was not the Germans but the Russians who prevailed. In the end it was not their material and technical superiority which gave the Germans their victory but the deficiency in the Russian higher command of the ordinary human virtues of courage, loyalty and sacrifice, which were so magnificently displayed by the Russian soldier and some of his officers in the field; more especially, Solzhenitsyn takes pains to remind us, because they were reinforced in the soldier by the only two realities which he regarded as greater than himself: God and the Tsar, the only things, one of their officers says, for which the Russian peasant would fight. For Solzhenitsyn's account of the battle takes into account a factor which modern historians (and novelists) normally omit

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from their calculations: that mysterious entity described by Stendhal as "the uncomfortable gift, father of so many ridiculous actions, called 'the Soul'...." For Solzhenitsyn, as for Stendhal, this is the single source of everything which makes life livable or desirable.

BUT BATTLES, even though, when once joined, they form an isolated universe of their own, do not take place in a vacuum. For Solzhenitsyn, Tannenberg provides a concentrated image of Russia as a whole as it existed in 1914, and his narrative of the battle is introduced, and interrupted, by a variety of scenes from the home front, as yet almost unaffected by Russia's unwieldy mobilisation or the disastrous advance into East Prussia—from St Petersburg, overnight renamed Petrograd, to the disgust of its inhabitants, who resent the loss of their saint; from Rostov-on-the-Don, where Solzhenitsyn was born; from a landed estate in the Ukraine. Life here proceeds almost as if there were no war, yet already the host of characters Solzhenitsyn introduces to us are directly or indirectly beginning to feel its effects and we ourselves, as we read, have the sense that Tannenberg is going to change them and their lives out of all recognition. The picture which emerges from these scenes of Russian life, crystallised, at a moment of supreme historical crisis, is one which is in many ways unexpected and, for that reason, it strikes us with a kind of shock that makes it intensely fresh and vivid.

SOLZHENITSYN makes no attempt to disguise the degeneracy of the Russian Imperial régime, its backwardness, its ineptitude, its total inadequacy to a dawning era of science and technology, most of all perhaps its cynicism, which is for him the worst of all vices, corrupting everyone and everything it touches. All this is explicit in his account of the failure of the Russian higher command to meet the test of modern war, and throughout the novel he continually emphasises the contrast between the technical progressiveness of the Germans, at every level of society, and the primitive backwardness of the Russians. But he is equally insistent that beneath the petrified crust of the Russian autocracy there are new and untapped sources of strength and creativeness which, given freedom of action, could transform Russia into a modern and advanced society. These sources of strength Solzhenitsyn identifies not, as we have become accustomed to be told, with the revolutionary aspirations of the working class, which play no part whatever in Solzhenitsyn's Russia at this stage in its history, but with the forces of a developing capitalism, still no doubt young and relatively feeble, but already with achievements to its credit and, given time, freedom and opportunity, capable of releasing Russia from the stranglehold of bureaucracy and autocracy which is squeezing her to death.

Thus, for instance, the great estate outside Rostov belonging to Zakhar Ferapontych Tomchak is no aristocratic fief of a frivolous absentee landlord, nor some decaying Cherry Orchard with its face firmly turned to the joys and horrors of the past. It is the personal creation of Zakhar Ferapontych, once an illiterate and landless shepherd, who has acquired its rich acres by his own incessant labour and effort and made of them a great agricultural enterprise, equipped with the most modern Western machinery and exploiting all the resources of the most advanced agricultural techniques. He has a Mercedes car, and his son a Rolls-Royce, one of nine in the whole of Russia,[2] but when inspecting his farms, his mills, his granaries, his fish-ponds, he prefers to travel in his horse-drawn carriage in which he feels "more at home." His life is one of intense and creative labour, directed by his native intelligence and shrewdness; his friends are engineers, agronomists, importers of European machines, practical men who believe like himself that man's noblest task is to make two blades of grass grow where one grew before. He has a peasant's contempt for ideology, most of all the ideologies of immature students and revolutionaries. Like the brilliant engineer Obodovsky, who writes books in German on "general economics, the lay-out of ports, on methods of industrial concentration, on the prospects of trade between Russia and Western Europe, on price fluctuation—quite apart from his specialised works on the mining industry which were of interest only to mining engineers," he believes that the future of Russia belongs to hard-headed and hard-working men like himself, whose labours are inspired by an almost visionary sense of what modern science and technique can do for their country. Only this also is a vision which is killed stone-dead at Tannenberg.

If such men as Tomchak or Obodovsky are to be found on the land, in factories, in engineering works, in scientific laboratories, they are also to be found even in the army. The two dominating figures of *August 1914* are the commander of the Second Army, General Samsonov, and the general staff officer from G.H.Q., Colonel Vorotyntsov. Together they reflect all the weak-

[2]And one of the 475 motor cars of all types, the only civilian pool of motor transport on which the Russian army could draw to supplement its total of 679 motor vehicles.

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nesses, but also all the potential strength, both of the Russian army and of Russia herself. Samsonov is a soldier's general, brave, simple, honest, conscientious, and with an instinctive understanding of his troops which has its basis in a shared religion and loyalty to the Tsar. But he is neither a tactician nor a strategist, and even if he had been it would have been impossible for him to exercise effective command of his army. Appointed at a moment's notice, with an incompetent staff he has not chosen for himself, executing an operational plan he has had no share in framing, his forces under strength and lacking adequate communications or means of reconnaissance, harassed and bewildered by a stream of senseless directives from the higher command, Samsonov advances into East Prussia like a sleepwalker; and when at length he wakes up and realises the catastrophe that has overtaken his army, and his betrayal of the sacred trust placed in him by the Tsar, he commits suicide, first praying to God to forgive him for what he knows to be a mortal sin.

Samsonov is a truly tragic figure. The day before he takes his life, says Solzhenitsyn, "General Samsonov was still alive, but his army was dead," and so, he implies, was Imperial Russia. Colonel Vorotyntsov is a man of an altogether different stamp, a representative of the "Young Turks" of the Russian General staff, who have devoted themselves to a serious study of the problems of war and have drawn the right conclusions from Russia's defeat by Japan; yet, while deeply conscious of Russia's backwardness, believe that hard work, technical knowledge, determination can, together with the courage of the Russian soldier, turn the balance of war in Russia's favour. When these factors are present, he feels, he *knows*, that the Russians can beat the Germans, and all his experiences of the battle confirm him in his belief.

Dispatched as a liaison officer to Second Army by G.H.Q., in an effort to dispel the fog of war that has already descended on its plans, and realising there that neither General Samsonov nor his staff have any conception of what is happening on their front, Vorotyntsov pursues his mission further, down to corps and division and regimental headquarters and finally to the front line itself where, to his joy, he finds himself taking command of a leaderless unit and guiding the retreat of its few survivors through the encircling German lines back to Russian territory.

Through Vorotyntsov's eyes we see every aspect of the battle, at every level, and in the end we feel, like him, that only we are in a position to understand the disaster of Tannenberg: its causes, its consequences, the lessons to be drawn from it and where the responsibility for it lay. History may tell us otherwise, but we know, because we were there. In this at least *August 1914* triumphantly survives the challenge to Tolstoy which is implicit throughout the novel, for Solzhenitsyn succeeds in finding a meaning in history where Tolstoy could find none, and for this reason his story, for all its tragedy, leaves one at the end, not oppressed, but exhilarated and invigorated. It concludes with a conference held at G.H.Q., presided over by the Grand Duke Nikolas Nikolayevitch, to discuss what happened at Tannenberg. There Vorotyntsov tries to convey the message he has brought back from the battle, but is overruled and silenced by his superiors who, with a typical combination of cynicism, frivolity, and irresponsibility, decide that, Samsonov conveniently having committed suicide, the easy and obvious course is to throw all the blame on him; while the true consequences of the defeat are even further disguised by the opportune announcement of a great Russian victory over the Austrians at Lvov. "Gentlemen! The Mother of God has not abandoned Russia! The city of Lvov has been captured. A colossal victory. We must give the news to the press."

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE, in a limited space, to do justice to the richness and scope, the variety and complexity, of this marvellous novel, especially because it represents only a part of an as yet uncompleted whole. Only time, and its completion, will make a final judgment on it possible, but one already has the feeling that they will confirm one's sense that here is a masterpiece; most of all perhaps because, as in his previous novels, one is continually aware of Solzhenitsyn's extraordinary gift for coming close to reality, so that only the thinnest of veils seems to separate one from it. His realism may not be socialist, and *August 1914* will not please the Soviet Union of Writers, but it is the medium for an almost visionary power of imagination, which in this book is both a novelist's and an historian's.

It is a pleasure to be able to add that the translation, by Michael Glenny, is excellent; but the reader would have been greatly helped by a more generous provision of maps (the one provided is quite inadequate) and by a detailed chart of the order of battle and chain of command of the ill-fated Second Army.

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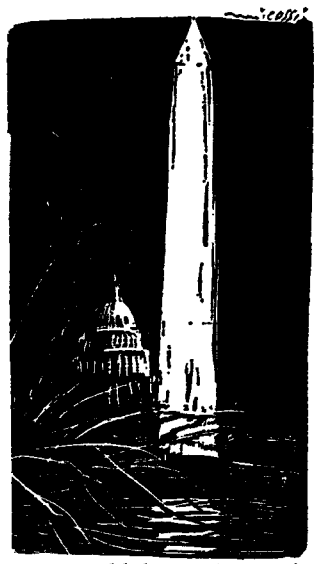
AMERICAN CHRONICLE

The Prospects of Civility

By Edward Shils



A FEW YEARS ago, Mr Louis Heren portentously announced in the London *Times* that the ensuing summer would show whether the United States would disintegrate. He did not say what he meant by "disintegration." Did he mean that the United States would enter upon an age of "warring kingdoms?" Did he mean that the federal government would lose all capacity to exert effective authority, that it would become like the governments of Russia during the last months of the Provisional Government and the years of civil war? He was not explicit on what the breaking of the nation would entail. At about the same time, interested parties began to discuss the feasibility of a revolutionary seizure of power in the United States. It was to work by rendering the federal government powerless as the police and the state militia proved unable to deal with urban disorders in black districts. The discussion extended no further than the revolutionary vision, but for a time it was enthusiastically cultivated among fashion designers, film critics, book reviewers, publishers' men, stock market plungers and idlers, black (and white) celebrities dressed like Fidel Castro and Che Guevara.

Those of us who are rather more familiar with the United States than Mr Heren or the *beau monde* of revolution, and who do not have to earn our livelihood by writing melodramatic speculations in the daily press or indulge in the pleasure of being safely daring, did not go on record as anticipating such a cataclysm. Nonetheless, many things were happening which needed to be taken to heart by those who cared for their country. The United States has had many troubles for much of the past decade, and there is a lot that is seriously amiss, quite apart from such extreme eventualities as Mr Heren seemed to anticipate and the revolutionary butterflies of the day seemed to desire.

Certain things are obvious. There is a substantial amount of unemployment; the inflation goes on and on; the number of persons dependent for their means of daily life on payments from governmental welfare funds is immense and shows little prospect of diminution; the children and adolescents as well as the adults supported by the welfare system become demoralised; very many young persons have become "hooked" on addictive drugs; rapes, murders, housebreakings, purse-snatchings, arson, "muggings" show no sign of letting up; large parts of the black population have been fuming with bitterness; great tracts of the major cities of the country are scenes of desolate squalor. The war in Viet Nam continues, and the United States is still very much entangled in it. Powerful, tenacious, sluggish and wasteful bureaucratic machines burden every governmental initiative through their vested interest in their ongoing operation. Probably never before has the image of America and its institutions been so disfigured in the imagination of the intellectuals and so incurred their animus.

TO SET AGAINST these simple and massive facts are a few no less simple and massive. The large-scale rioting with its looting and burning by black persons in black quarters of the big cities seems to have stopped; the students in the universities are silent and studious; the bombings, arson and random destruction by the offspring of student radicalism have stopped; the Black Panthers are in decay; and after the three country-shaking political assassinations of the middle 1960s, there has been only one attempted assassination of a significant political figure and that was unsuccessful.

The country, then, has not disintegrated. It is difficult to say whether the worst is over, but it is certainly evident that the spectacular worst has receded from the public eye. Those who told us that the end was at hand are now quieter; the fevers of their apocalyptic enthusiasm have abated, and the prospects of revolution are no longer so eagerly and fashionably canvassed. *The New York Review of Books* has retreated from its strident and ingenious justifications of violence; *Esquire* (the *New York Review* of the

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haberdashers) has also climbed down from its modish praise of revolutionism. *Commentary* has made a sharp turnabout. James Baldwin and LeRoi Jones are either less voluble or less frequently reported, and the sovereign estate of "youth" no longer has its plenipotentiaries moving so freely through the offices and columns of *The New York Times*. The patrons of "youth" and "revolution" in the world of television have withdrawn. President Nixon seems to be making the running, enjoying widespread support despite numerous misgivings about his domestic accomplishments. Senator McGovern, having gained the nomination after an artfully executed coup by the "new forces" against the traditional machine politicians of the Democratic Party, is trying to trim his sails to what appears to be a resurgent wind of philistinism in the country.

IT HAS BECOME QUIET ENOUGH in the United States to think again about what the country needs in order for its affairs to be brought into a more reasonable state. An organism ravaged by illness might recover its previous equilibrium, but societies are not likely to do so. Every disorder leaves its imprint. The beliefs on which society rests are extraordinarily tenacious, but their tenacity is accomplished not only by drawing on the potentialities which they possess within themselves but through assimilation from experience and from the traditions which have challenged them. The challenges, paltry though they might be in their intellectual merits, have proved stronger than those who contended them; a good bit of the challenge has been assimilated into the outlook of the challenged.

The United States is, thus, not at all likely to become what it once was; the question is whether it can regain *enough* of what it once was. Can those moral and civil traditions which guided American society through two centuries be refreshed enough to withstand the ravages which they have suffered through the expansion and development of other strands of belief which are no less traditional to the country? The disorders of recent years, it should be understood, are the products of traditions no less endemic in the United States than are the traditions which were for a time pushed to the wall. Many of America's vices are no more than the overly emphatic amplification of tendencies inherent in its virtues. But can they be made to recede? Can the virtues of its vices of philistinism and populism come to the aid of its more unalloyed virtue of civility?

The reviled culture of the old *Saturday Evening Post*, that organ of the *"booboisie"* so derided by H. L. Mencken, appears to be re-establishing itself in the aura which emanates from the Nixon administration. The widespread support for President Nixon and the Republican Party among the working and middle classes is an attachment to the general tone of the old-fashioned philistinism of order which suffuses the Nixon administration. It is this, rather than the particular accomplishments of the incumbent administration—they are not numerous—which draws the approbation of the working and middle classes. The general ethos of the Nixon presidency is expressed in its opposition to a fundamental reform of the law governing abortion, its patriotic refusal to tolerate an amnesty for those young men who refused to be conscripted into the armed forces, its dissatisfaction with the inevitabilities of the welfare state, and its distaste for the alienated highbrow culture. There is about the Nixon administration an air of the archaic respectability which the partisans of progress deride and which appeared to be fast fading from the land. All this appears to be against the direction of history, and to be an attempt to reinstate the time before the great depression of the 1930s.

These times will, however, never be reinstated. There are towering and insuperable obstacles, and one is the fact that those who yearn for this past age—which commended as self-evident the virtues of self-support, familial authority and loyalty, individual ambition, patriotism, acquisition and ownership and a certain measure of piety—have also accepted some of the beliefs of those of whom they disapprove so fervently. Of course, the emphases differ considerably but the overlapping is undeniable—partly a result of common traditions, partly a result of the influence of the progressivists in education, press and television. The yearners for the old order also accept the hedonism of the progressivist party; they share equally the belief in the sacredness of ever-expanding desires and demands. They share its dislike of bureaucracy while they also accept the centrality of the federal government almost as much as those they revile. They distrust government only a little differently from those they so heartily dislike; but like the antinomian *bien-pensants* of progressivism in the new left, the philistines also expect whatever is wrong to be put right by government. They are both sceptical of politicians, but they think that by and through politics their desires will be fulfilled.

They are both populistic. They would both rather die than be buried by an "élitist" undertaker. Populism in the United States, as elsewhere in the world, took the life of the farmer as a model; and now, although the agricultural population has declined in its numerical weight, its populistic spirit has reached into the rest of

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American society. The anticipated supporters of the Republicans are populistic; they see a virtuous, industrious and respectable people misused and exploited by bureaucrats and radical intellectuals. The Democratic Party, which the radical intellectuals (except for the small Maoist and Trotskyite sects) are now supporting, is permeated by populism; both the new Democrats and the old machine Democrats are populistic in their idiom, although they differ in their conception of just who are "the people."

THERE IS A TRADITION of intellectual populism in the United States from the time of the muckrakers onward. The newer radical intellectuals, more comprehensively and more vehemently hostile to American society than their forerunners, have concentrated this populistic tradition on to the most peripheral elements of American society, the *Lumpenproletariat*. Republicans invoke the spirit of "middle America"—meaning the more or less respectable working classes, the farmers, and the middle classes—against the *Lumpenproletariat* and its radical intellectual protagonists. Vice-President Spiro Agnew's robust sallies on behalf of the "silent majority" against the "vested interests" of television and press, were very much in the populistic tradition. In the United States populism is so ingrained into political thought that even those who refuse to accept its traditional goals cannot help speaking populistically.

Yet, with all this populism there still flickers throughout the United States a certain ambivalence, a *faiblesse* for the WASPS and their glories. The pride of the radical intellectuals in the patronage of the late Edmund Wilson and of Mr Robert Lowell, and the general anglophilia of *The New York Review* show that there is much in common between those who think they are the sworn enemies of "philistine America" and those who are the avowed leaders of the philistines.

Even in what appears to be distinctive of the new culture, namely the idol of individuality, there is continuity and not disjunction. The primacy of inner experience, or the expansion of the imagination, is only a special twist of the tradition which asserted the superiority of the individual to the authority of traditional institutions. In its European forms, the cult of individuality was associated with repugnance for modern society, for the aridity of the bourgeoisie, and for the vulgarity of democracy. The religion of art was antithetical to the rule of the people. But, in the United States today, populism and aestheticism and bohemianism have been brought into union in "art for the people," art as popular entertainment. Chicago, with its huge steel Pablo Picasso sculpture outside the municipal building where Mayor Daley is master of all that he surveys, and the ceramic mural of Marc Chagall outside the First National Bank, bespeaks that union in the Middle Western heart of Philistia.

Romanticism was the ultimate parent of all of them, and it is not a distortion of their natures that they should be united as they are now. Present-day America, with all its antagonisms, is the heir of romanticism.

THIS IS THE SITUATION which is confronted by Mr Irving Kristol in the series of elegant and subtly allusive essays which have appeared in various American periodicals over the past five years and which he has now brought together in a slender book of great merit.[1] Mr Kristol adds something very important to recent political discussion in the United States. What he adds is the appreciation of civility which is the virtue of the citizen and which has been so lacking in the debate in recent years about the course of American events. The theme of all of Mr Kristol's essays is the tradition of concern for the common good: a concern about the confining structure of institutions and beliefs within which individual proclivities and group interests are to be pursued. Without that concern, a society becomes a "mob," full of clamorous demands and without self-discipline. A civil order cannot be sustained where a "mob" prevails and where impulse, individual desire, and special group interest are the only principles which govern conduct in the private and public spheres.

Mr Kristol has a Tacitean tone: like Tacitus, he is deeply disturbed by the loss of the "republican virtues" among his fellow-countrymen. He appreciates the wisdom of the founders of the American republic, particularly the authors of the *Federalist Papers*, who counted on a self-reliant citizenry disciplined by a concern for the common good and a realism of judgment which led them to cut their coats proportionately to their cloth. He thinks that American society has gone astray because the tradition of the republican virtues prescribed by the founders of the American republic has been lost in the swelling of populistic progressivism. He notes with regret the transformation of the sober political philosophy of democracy, albeit fully aware of what is problematic in democracy, into the "Jacksonian-egalitarian-populist transcendental faith in the common man," which sees no limits to the capacities of governments or to the bountifulness of nature and man's contrivances, and which views with approval "the enduring mindlessness"

[1] *On The Democratic Idea in America.* By IRVING KRISTOL. Harper and Row, $5.00.

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of populistic democracy. He does not hesitate to challenge populism in its most crucial belief regarding the virtue of "the people." He does not think that every impulse, desire, or demand originating in "the people" has a moral claim to execution. He knows that the people can be "corrupt", not just the politicians and "the interests."

Mr Kristol is resolutely opposed to utopianism in politics, in domestic as well as in foreign policy. He thinks that utopianism has produced in the past half-century a "high minded hypocrisy [which] has completely driven statesmanlike reasonableness out of the public forum." He sees this utopianism as a product of populism and progressivism. He knows that any society needs beliefs, but the rigidity and simplicity of ideology is damaging; it reinforces passions and causes turbulence. He dislikes

> ideologically turbulent societies because they have a tendency to barbarize man who may previously have been at least modestly civilized, and to primitivize ideas that may previously have been at least modestly fine and complex. . . .

This standpoint is one which those who unthinkingly accept the postulates which Mr Kristol criticises are quick to call reactionary. Such an accusation is simply and simple-mindedly wrong because it postulates a dichotomous division of political positions into reactionary and progressive. Mr Kristol's position is too complex for such treatment. He does not yearn for times past and lost, and he believes in the improvability of man's lot.

> We certainly do have it in our power to make improvements in the human estate. But to think we have it in our power to change people so as to make the human estate wonderfully better than it is, remarkably different from what it is, and in very short order, is to assume that this generation of Americans can do what no other generation in all human history can accomplish.

He believes that "many of our institutions—political, economic, educational . . . need substantial reformation", but he thinks that the power of politics in these matters is limited and he regards "the exaggerated hopes we attach to politics as the curse of our age."

He is no partisan of the philistines. He believes that philistinism has in the past made for political stability, but it was self-defeating because it was "lacking in a sense of humanity." He is as critical of what passes for conservatism in the United States as he is of the current type of liberalism and radicalism.

American society—which believes that every want is good, as good indeed as any other and should and can be satisfied, which refuses to acknowledge the legitimacy of institutions, where the moral and religious beliefs which imposed self-restraint have become enfeebled, and where whole sections of the population resist or recommend resistance to any moral or governmental authority—is, then, in some serious danger. It needs at all times and more now than ever, "steadiness of character, deliberativeness of mind, and a mild predisposition to subordinate one's own special interests to the public interest." These are the elements of "republican morality", and it is these that Mr Kristol would have reinstated.

MR KRISTOL'S VIEWS are expounded through essays written for particular occasions, and it would be unjust to consider this book as a comprehensive and exhaustive treatise. Nonetheless, the coherence and the depth of his analysis, the steady consistency of moral disposition and insight, do permit us to raise some questions about how fully his analysis accounts for our present troubles, and to ask whether implicit in it is a recommendation or a set of recommendations for getting the better of them.

Is his diagnosis correct? There is much truth in it. The beliefs which American society has about itself are indeed important; and the progressivist intellectuals with their romantic ideas of the primacy of the self, their adversarial attitude towards civil authority, and their belief in the virtue of "the people" have contributed much to the formation of those beliefs. They must, accordingly, bear some of the responsibility for the contemporary American disorder. Intellectuals have become very prominent in the United States, thanks to the staffing of the television and press and certain parts of the civil service by intellectuals who share much of the oppositional culture. The image of the immediate world offered to—and, to some extent, accepted by—the audiences of television and press has come in an adulterated way to approximate the image held by more or less progressivistic literary and social-science intellectuals.

Intellectuals have focused popular grievances and contributed to the populist denigration of institutions. This, moreover, has been going on for a long time even in the years when intellectuals were not so prominent in the public sphere and were thought not to be so influential as they have recently become. But intellectuals did not create the grievances or the denigratory attitudes. They only helped to expand their domain and adherence. The continuous expansion of wants in America has been, in part, a function of the greatly increased productivity of the American economy which was not really a creation of intellectuals; this continuous expansion of wants has much to do with the inflation which, in turn,

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aggravates the vices which Mr Kristol deplores and erodes the virtues which he praises. The belief in the possibility of a speedy and definitive elimination of inequities in society, *e.g.*, the elimination of poverty, and the complete solution of the problems associated with the injustices suffered by the black population, has certainly accentuated the acrimony of political discourse. Acrimonious political discourse is one of the firmest traditions of the United States, and has some connection with populism. The belief in the definitive and speedy solution of problems, and the inevitable disappointment of such hopes, has probably fostered hatred of and withdrawal from American society. The expectation of such solutions makes their frustration appear to be exclusively a result of deliberate refusal by those in authority to do what clearly lies within their powers. The belief that whatever a society needs can be accomplished through political action has indeed led to unbridled demands and rancorous disappointment, and it is going to continue to do so, as long as the primacy and potency of politics are assumed and as long as demands are uninhibited. Mr Kristol's diagnosis holds up very well in this regard.

BUT CAN ALL THE FEATURES of American society which are unsatisfactory be attributed to the insufficient observance of the virtues necessary for democratic republics, to the deficient practice of civil self-restraint, etc.? I do not think that Mr Kristol would claim that. Nevertheless, much of his analysis could be extended considerably, without departing from his main standpoint. For example, academic social scientists in the United States have contributed to the exacerbation of hopes and to some of the consequent disillusion over failure to arrive at speedy solutions. It is certainly consistent with the views of Mr Kristol, who has such a modest estimate of human capacities, to acknowledge that many of our difficulties are at least in part the product of our presumptuous ignorance, of the errors in our understanding of ourselves and of our society, our incapacity to foresee the future consequences of our action, and of our simply not knowing in many critical situations just how to resolve the difficulties. Such a view is implicit in much that he says, and it is a pity that he does not make this explicit. As to whether our knowledge will ever reach that point is another matter, not to be discussed here beyond the point of saying that recent trends in the growth of such knowledge are not very encouraging. A greater judiciousness in the assessment of our understanding of the world might well be added to the list of those virtues needed in a republic.

Not all of our tribulations, however, are a result of the attrition of "republican virtues." Still, Mr. Kristol has looked at things from an angle which opens up a very large perspective. That being so, we may put a second question: What are the prospects of a resurgence of "republican virtues," of the reasonableness and self-restraint which our society needs as much as it needs realistic knowledge and good fortune? Mr Kristol's ironic sobriety is in place here. "Not great but not hopeless" must be the prognosis.

The grounds which I adduce for this not very enthusiastic thesis are the following: the intellectuals of the United States to whom Mr Kristol rightly attributes much importance and responsibility are not going to become less important in the future. But will they become more responsible? By and large, a survey of the present situation does not bring heartening results. One of the main reasons for the sombre prospect lies in the undiminishing importance of intellectuals: modern society cannot dispense with them, and even if our governors wished to do so they could not. The irreversible commitment of modern society to education and to scientific technology gives intellectuals a practically impregnable position. Certainly for the remainder of this century, university education will continue to be believed an unavoidable necessity; it is likely even to be increasingly so. American intellectuals have a long oppositional tradition; and although it seemed to weaken somewhat from the administration of Franklin Roosevelt to the early years of the Kennedy administration, the older oppositional attitudes have persisted. They received a powerful stimulus to a virulent renewal from the student revolution of the 1960s; and although that too has subsided, the renewal of radicalism with which it was connected left a very tangible precipitate. I think that its spiritual impact has been even deeper than the influence of the unemployment at home and the power of fascism and Nazism abroad during the 1930s. This circumstance offers little hope for the renewal of civility, of those "republican virtues" praised by Mr Kristol.

The people of the United States are, furthermore, unlikely to become less demanding of the services of government, of provisions for welfare and for education. Governments and political leaders are not likely to try to re-educate their people to a greater modesty of wants. The populistic, hedonistic, individualistic and egalitarian ethos is too deeply rooted in the United States for the flood of wants and demands to recede. This ethos has a history as long as the history of the Republic, and it has expanded continuously in its scope. No politicians have the courage, whatever their inner convictions, to

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oppose it; and they will, therefore, in their efforts to meet the demands of the populace, have to keep a vast bureaucracy going; and they will have to rely on the intellectuals to help them as experts, advisers, administrators, research workers, technologists, etc.

CAN WE EXPECT THESE INTELLECTUALS to become more realistic, more sympathetic with a view which asserts the limited capacities of authority and its institutions? Can we expect them to become less antinomian, less oppositional than they have been? The prospect is not hopeless, but neither is it reassuring. The universities of the United States have long been the home of the attitudes which Mr Kristol finds so uncongenial; and in the past quarter-century there has been a tendency for them to become more so. The increasing popularity of the social sciences—in which the word "science" is to be understood as in "Christian Science"— means that a technocratic and oppositional culture is being reproduced, expanded and diffused over the whole of American society as a larger proportion of the society passes through the experience of higher education.

Can university administrators and teachers show more character than they have over the past years? Can they educate their pupils out of the self-indulgence and opinionatedness of the radicals, and out of the narrowness of spirit of the politically indifferent ones who are quite willing to let the devil take the hindmost while looking out exclusively for themselves?[2]

The universities will certainly produce some who practice the republican virtues. Will they be enough in number? And how much attention will they draw from the politicians, as compared with the passionately partisan who appear to have a greater capacity to catch the attention of the politicians?

Can the politicians of the United States gain more self-confidence in themselves for their dealings with intellectuals while avoiding relapse into the crudity of bearing and their responsiveness to sectional, private and populistic pressures which have been characteristic of them in the past? Can they demand a better accounting from their intellectual collaborators, counsellors, and servants while avoiding the anti-intellectual brutishness which has cropped up recurrently in America for nearly a century?

The best feature of the situation is its heterogeneity. The country has not gone entirely to the dogs; not even the intellectuals have. One can take Mr Kristol himself as an example. About eight years ago Mr Kristol, who was once the managing editor of *Commentary* and later a founding editor of *Encounter*, began a new quarterly journal in New York called *The Public Interest*. To it he has drawn an intellectually and morally impressive body of contributors. I need mention only Professors James Wilson, Daniel Moynihan, Daniel Bell (who is also co-editor of *The Public Interest*), James Coleman, Morris Janowitz, Harry Johnson, Seymour Lipset, Nathan Glazer. There are numerous others and they are scarcely less weighty. His contributors, like himself, have provided a point of crystallisation for a liberal, humane, and realistic democratic standpoint, a standpoint of genuine civility which is expounded with great reasonableness and much solid knowledge. They have, to a man, stood out against the ravages of the oppositional radical populism of the progressivist intellectuals, academics, publicists, literary men and student leaders. They were as steadfast when the disorder, through which we have been passing, was at its height as they are now when conditions and minds are a little less tumultuous. Their readership has grown as has their influence. They, too, stand in a tradition, the tradition to which Mr Kristol repeatedly alludes. It is a tradition of civility which was never wholly absent in the United States and which has survived some pretty hard times—the dreary 1920s, the temptations of fellow-travelling in the 1930s and 1940s, the first McCarthyism of the 1940s and 1950s, and the explosion of student revolutionism. The survival of Mr Kristol's quarterly and his growing circle with their unceasing intelligence and sense of proportion are as much facts of the present situation in the United States as are the much more numerous currents which they criticise.

One point which Mr Kristol does not make in his essays is that not everyone, either in the intellectual stratum or in the laity, need espouse and practice the "virtues" needed by a republic for those virtues to be decisively influential. A "saving remnant" need not be more than a remnant to steady the minds of rulers, publicists, and teachers and the more numerous minds which are ruled, informed and taught by them. Therein lies a modest hope for the country. Mr Kristol and his collaborators might themselves be the answer to the question about the prospects of civility in America.

[2] Mr Kristol does devote one of his essays to the universities. He is no enthusiast about the universities as institutions to aid in the reinstatement of republican virtues. Unfortunately, this essay, while being one of the most specific in the book and containing the closest to a fairly concrete proposal, is rather disappointing. He makes the reform of the universities turn on the establishment of "consumers' sovereignty" within them.

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Alan Heuser

Only to Connect

"Hello. Is that Aurangabad?"
Silence.
"Are you there? Hello?"
"This Bombay. We trying to get through."

First class hotel room in Bombay,
Air conditioner rattling heavy wet heat,
Wife bedded down with fever and dysentery,
Cockroaches in the bathroom, a company,
And I struggle to communicate by phone.
Meanwhile servants pad in and out with
Pudding and porridge, bland diet.

Phone rings. "Hello."
"This hotel. Trying your call."
Minutes tick insects into
Hours of a bilious monsoon.

Waiting on the Deccan are
Ellora and Ajanta Caves
Near goal of call. And we cannot go.

Ringaring. "Hellohello.
This Bombay. Lost contact.
No intermediate station.
Call back. One hour."

Our room connects to screened bathroom.
Each click of toilet light brings
Cockroaches in. Assaults are futile.
Cockroaches piston out of toilet roll to floor.
Soundly hit, they scurry off
Somewhere into reserve.

Our first damp days in India.
Six hours for one call.
Then, "Hello." "Hello. This Bombay.
Nono, impossible to make through.
Thank you. There is no connexion."
I hang up the phone, walk to bathroom,
Discover there are no screens but open slats
That let cockroaches in.
A day lost: reservations not cancelled,
Cockroaches and dysentery in charge.

Back to bed I sink into damp sheets
And taste failure as
A way of life.

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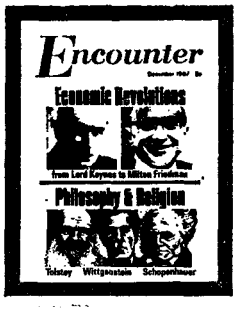
It's a Gift



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Two Poems

Things of the Past

"Your great-grandfather was . . . ."

And Mrs. C, our tart old Scots
landlady, with her stomping legs,
four bristles sprouted from her chin-
wart, she who crisply
chats away
about Montrose, founder of her clan,
as though she's just now fresh
from tea with him,
regards you
incredulously, a bastard gargoyle
off some bastard architecture,
one that simply grew:
"Not to know
your great-grandfather! How do
you live? O you Americans!"
She
cannot see what freedom it affords,
your ignorance,
a space swept
clear of all the litter of lives
lived.
And yet who can dismiss
her words entirely? It burdens too,
this emptiness,
a massive presence
not a room away that, no matter
how you hammer at its wall,
refuses to admit you.
As though
you woke and in a place you thought
familiar,
then had a sense (what
is it that has been disturbed?)
of one you never met
yet somehow
know—a look echoing among the dusty
pictures,
that myopic glass
reflecting like a sunset, lingered
inside trees,
a meditative smile,
a breath warm to your cheek,
your brow,
this hand (whose?)
moving on your blanket in a gesture
that you fail to recognise

yet know it as you know
the taste through oranges of sun-
light working in them still—
then gone as you began to stir.
And for a moment dawn seems blurred
as in a mist, seems wistful

for a feeling it cannot
achieve . . . the sun breaks through,
an instant medleying the leaves.

Theodore Weiss

Half-Mile Rows

Mounted upon a tool
no dreamer of idyll knew
heavy against the broken earth
looking back at trench of clods
he feels the meaning of lines
he never read—sheer plod
makes plough down sillion/Shine—

but a poet of masculine hoes
or painter of feminine sickles
might find an idyll in this:

attach tool to tool
observe the virgin soil
mount
then begin
head cocked
in ponder of sheared sillion
and be but a fool mounted
upon a tool
dragging a tool;

or perform
occasional plodding pirouettes
to confuse the parallel pattern
conjure up
field mice
sparrows
beetles and such
diced in midsqueal
for accents along the way.

Either way
no painter of sickles
nor poet of hoes
would find it idyllic to plow
half-mile rows.

James Ballowe

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BOOKS & WRITERS

The Joycean Triumph

"Ulysses" Fifty Years After—By SEAMUS DEANE

DESPITE the vast quantities of exegetical study expended on *Ulysses*, little of it has to do with what Joseph Frank in his famous essay of 1945 called "the perceptual form of Joyce's novel." The questions we put surely need not concern the winner of the Gold Cup at Ascot in 1904. For the easily discovered answer, no matter how skilfully adapted to a critic's purposes, tells us nothing about the relation of this novel to its English and continental sources, to its contemporary present or to its future in which, fifty years later, we now live. It is as rash no doubt to attempt to answer these questions as it would be foolish to ignore them.

Part of Joyce's achievement was his successful introduction of erudition into a genre which had not previously borne its learning well. Intellectual vocation had had some grotesque embodiments in English fiction before Joyce took it up. Jude Fawley, Daniel Deronda, Ernest Pontifex, even perhaps Gissing's Harold Biffen, are strange company for Stephen Dedalus, and not even Casaubon, Ladislaw or Dorothea herself makes our sense of recognition any more emphatic. There is Dorian Gray of course, but he reminds us of only one aspect of Dedalus. Artist, rebel, intellectual, dedicated and scholarly fanatic—each one of these poses has a character to represent it. But Stephen contains them all in both *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*. He is the first ideologist to appear in English or American fiction, the first protagonist who did not feel it necessary to inform us of his ideas by giving a sermon on the subject. Hardy, of course, comes off worst in such a comparison with Joyce. Chesterton's bright remark has its force: Hardy "personifies the universe in order to give it a piece of his mind."

Portrait is the first novel in the English language in which a passion for thinking is fully presented; *Ulysses* is the first novel in which the activity of thought is the central concern and the determining influence on the form. Stephen is remarkable because his capacity for thought is a crucial, not an incidental, feature of his personality. Of those novel-heroes previously mentioned there is not one whose outstanding virtue is his intelligence. If he is intelligent, that is a symptom of the fact that he is admirable in some other, more "fundamental" respect. Moreover, in Stephen's case, both in *Portrait* and in *Ulysses*, the quality of his mind is one of the novel's formal and therefore moral achievements. By means of it, the novel is made more intelligible. When the quality of the mind of an intelligent hero lapses, the result can be disastrous and perhaps can also be an ominous commentary on the author's capacity to recognise the nature and form of his own intelligence. Lawrence is an outstanding example here. In *Kangaroo*, published only a year after *Ulysses*, we are frequently faced with announcements like this:

> Man that is born of woman is sick of himself. Man that is born of woman is tired of his day after day. And woman is like a mother with a tiresome child: what is she to do with him? What is she to do with him?—Man, born of woman.

Molly Bloom had answers and Stephen and Leopold Bloom had better questions. The search of each of these last two is conducted according to the rules of at least a certain dramatic propriety. Stephen thinks in a manner consonant with his personality and education; so does Bloom. The main point is that their thinking is not a series of solemn propositions, opposed by its nature to their random feelings. Their thinking is a mode of experiencing the world; for Stephen it is the most comprehensive mode, for Bloom, in his incompetence, it is a wished-for mode. It does not lead to discursive, essayistic interludes in the novel but is itself part of the novel's dramatised form. When it does become self-conscious, as in the last two chapters of

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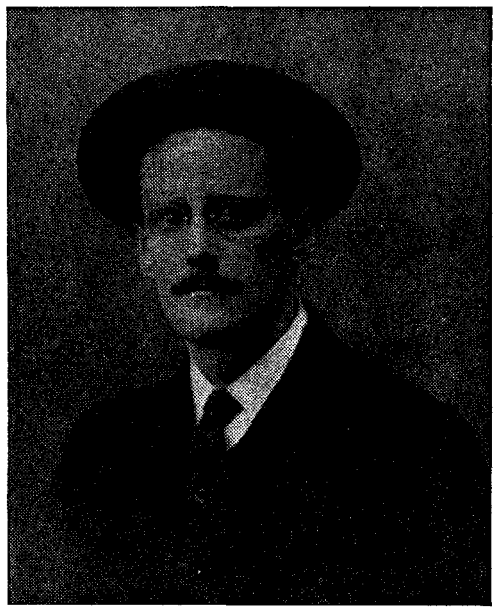
Portrait, we are aware that it is this very consciousness of itself that is being ironically dramatised.

IT IS, I BELIEVE, easier to understand Joyce's achievement in this respect by looking to the continental tradition of the novel. There the theme of intellectual vocation was much more deeply rooted and was treated with a subtlety quite foreign to the evangelical, female puritan spirit which so dominated the sentimental English novel. Perhaps *Middlemarch* more than any other single work shows how the innate provincialism of the English novel deprived it of a consciousness of itself as a part of a greater European culture. This is something conspicuously present in the French and, even more, in the Russian novel of the 19th century. One could not imagine *Crime and Punishment* or *Le Rouge et le Noir* without the idea of Europe, especially Christian Europe, as a living force in them, in their traditions, and in the minds of their creators. But *Emma* and *Great Expectations* and *Middlemarch* survive happily, and more modestly, apart from that idea. Not until an American, Henry James, arrived on the scene was the novel in English Europeanised, and the Irishman Joyce countered this achievement by Anglicising the European novel.



He had the instrument to do so in his own and in his country's Catholicism. The Irish version was not of the kind to create in its young men the frisson of aesthetic pleasure that passed for conviction among French *décadents* like Huysmans. In *En Route*, for instance, Durtal has the great advantage over Stephen Dedalus of starting in a Gothic cathedral in which the *De Profundis* and the *Dies Irae* are being magnificently played and sung. The Church is before him in all its historical splendour and the setting supports the exclamation that

> *Ah! la vraie preuve du Catholicisme, c'était cet art qu'il avait fondé, cet art que nul n'a surpassé encore! C'était, en peinture et en sculpture, les Primitifs; les mystiques dans les poésies et dans les proses; en musique, c'était le plain-chant; en architecture, c'était le roman et le gothique.*

Dedalus never had this seduction to yield to or to overcome. Yet Huysmans is interesting and important for Joyce, much more I would think than Wilde could have been, because the French author combined various forms of what one might call liturgical aestheticism with realism. (Valéry, after all, thought that Huysmans' work had *"marqué les limites du naturalisme."*) Besides Joyce inverts the typical attitude of a Huysmans or of a Wilde by the remarkable sensory hostility he has for a Catholicism that simultaneously fascinates him intellectually. Unlike Huysmans, he was not a man to Catholicise art in the name of the liturgy. Instead, he was to become the artificer of Catholicism, making of the religion a subject matter which had within it a number of organising principles which he, Joyce, could put into operation for his own purposes.

The advantages he gained from this fate or this decision (or both) were many. The greatest was that by it he entered into the mainstream of the European consciousness, not simply because he was of Catholic origins but because his Catholicism granted him an awareness of the European heritage from which he was in other respects separated. The story of the Greek wanderer Ulysses and a selective version of Roman Catholic history are the two major outlines that emerge through that palimpsest of cultural maps, the landscape of Dublin. Joyce's great contemporary, Thomas Mann, another novelist devoted to the epic analysis of a cultural disintegration, spoke of the importance of these two aspects of the European experience also. In an essay written in 1934 he emphasised the importance and vitality of a European culture which is based on classical antiquity and Christianity. Mann's comment is useful in helping to place Joyce. For the latter is obviously a European novelist in the sense that Mann is and in the sense in which Mann conceives of the idea of Europe:

> Say what you will: Christianity, the flower of Judaism, remains one of the two pillars upon which Western culture rests, the other being Mediterranean antiquity .... The critique of the twentieth century upon the Christian ethic (not to speak of

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> dogma and mythology); the changes that come about naturally with the flow of life; no matter how deep these go, or how transformingly they work, they are and will remain superficial effects. They can never touch the binding authority of the cultural Christianity of the Western world, which once achieved cannot be alienated.

There is a great difference between Huysmans' response to the culture of Christianity (in terms of its architecture, music and literature) and Mann's concept of "the cultural Christianity of the Western world." It is not wholly explained by referring to the political conditions in Germany that year and the consequent defensive assertion of value against barbaric forces. To understand the difference fully, I believe we must recognise the role Joyce has played between the era of Huysmans and that of Mann. Joyce registered, particularly in *Ulysses*, a mutation in European culture. He attempts to understand the experience of cultural disintegration by forging classical antiquity and Christianity into a fable of their collapse which would nevertheless be an ordered fable, one in which organisation and disorganisation would confront one another. Of course organisation must win since we are reading a novel and one rightly famous for the high articulacy of its form. But, on the other hand, we witness through that form a failure in which Stephen and Bloom share. We also share in it, suffer perhaps from their sharing in it, but do not suffer it ourselves. The sense of disorganisation is therefore all the more present to us because of the high degree of organisation the novel reaches in presenting it to us. The problem is, how is this achievement to be described? Can it be recognised in terms of what preceded and of what succeeded it? I believe that it can, and that the first step towards seeing how is to acknowledge the extent to which *Ulysses* broke the provincial bonds of the main tradition of English fiction. In doing so, it introduced into the European novel a parodied form of the English novel, to the final and mutual benefit of both.

IN 1800 MADAME DE STAËL explained the English predominance in the novel by pointing to the particularly important role which family life played in English culture. Her implicit comparison is always, of course, with France; at this stage she is still almost completely ignorant of Germany. The novel, she explains, is a particularly modern literary genre fitted by its nature to express the delights and tensions of married (or unmarried) love. Because of this familial bias women played a vital role in the development of the novel, both as authors and readers. They had more freedom and education in England than elsewhere. They therefore wrote and read novels about the family life which they dominated. There are flaws in this argument but its general truth seems to be unquestionable. The English novel displays a liking for and an interest in domestic bliss which no other novelistic tradition can equal. Madame de Staël was willing to attribute this to England's Protestantism. So, too, during and after the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars were the English, since their Protestantism and their chauvinism combined nicely in the image of family Bible-reading round the fireside. With the rise of the Victorian middle classes there also came into being a powerful censorship of the treatment of domestic love in literature by setting, in Chesterton's words, "certain verbal limits" which ensured "that every writer shall draw the line at literal physical description of things socially concealed." This cosy moralism, this strain of familial sentimentality and hearthside English scenes get full expression in Dickens, and from him they radiated even more strongly through the English novel of Joyce's youth.

This is the provincial tradition which he inherited. The force of anti-French propaganda in the early part of the century had been such that the writer, especially one distinguished by his "ideas" (usually little more than anti-conventional social sentiments of as great an antiquity as the conventional ones he opposed), was still liable, when he appeared in the English novel, to be thought of as foreign, sexually promiscuous or outspoken, elegant in peasant surroundings, Bohemian in middle-class situations. Figures as relatively minor as Lydgate or Fitzpiers are good examples of the type, although Heathcliff and Rochester belong to this category too. Their Byronic ferocity separates them, of course, from the others, and is perhaps all the more impressive because it is a function of their personalities as such and not merely an indication of the fact that they are artists and therefore odd or different.

THE STANDARD approach to the writer, epitomised in a novel like Gissing's *New Grub Street*, was to picture him as torn between the demands of the Market and of Art. Almost nothing of this survives into Joyce, either in *Portrait* or in *Ulysses*. Joyce changes the wearisome, discursive idiom by which the act of writing and the fate of being a writer were seen as social activities which led to social problems. In his work, writing becomes an existential act; being a writer becomes an existential state. Even more, Stephen in *Ulysses* is not a writer at all. He is an intellectual, concerned to define himself in terms which are more extensive and precise than those available to the common man, Bloom. As in *Portrait*, our

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sense of Stephen is controlled by the fact that he must find an epistemology of art before he can write. Writing does not depend on certain well-worn rebellious attitudes towards convention. It depends on the questioning, at a high pitch, of the nature of the relation between the perceiving artist and the perceived world; and the relation between this and the transposition of it into fiction. To be an artist, one must be an intellectual first. Valéry had anticipated Joyce in this, in some ways, but it is in conjunction with Valéry that Joyce's conception of the role of the artist needs to be understood. Stephen Dedalus is closer to Monsieur Teste than he is to any figure in English fiction. *Ulysses* is, after all, the greatest novel in the Symbolist tradition. And the Symbolists were, after all, French.

So, the British tradition which Joyce inherited was in a peculiarly emphatic state of provincialism, proceeding as it was, with a sort of insolent mediocrity, to lose itself in what Chesterton described as "a thing being everywhere called 'Art', the Greek Spirit, the Platonic Ideal, and so on." These elements persist, of course, in Joyce, but not in that isolation which so dates and disfigures *Esther Waters* or *Dorian Gray*. Indeed, Moore and Wilde, more than most, entirely fulfilled the coarse public notion of the artist as a sort of Frenchified dandy—the notion which was so prevalent a part of the long propaganda war between England and France in which these two were comfortably ensnared. Because of it, they do not belong to the modern movement in any real sense. They are minor 19th-century figures with all the major 19th-century features. Joyce incorporates these features in Stephen's aesthetic aspirations and goes far beyond in setting these aspirations in a wide European context which, by virtue of its Catholic overtones, is uniform with the young man's personal experience and by virtue of its literary allusion is uniform with his inherited literary tradition. The most salient fact about *Ulysses*, however, is that it breaks the basic mould of the bourgeois novel in England, the family unit in terms of which all social groupings had been previously seen, and substitutes for it, first, a parodied version of the family and second, the strange isolated figure of the outcast artist to whom exile is a supreme value and simultaneously a great disaster. Stephen's true forerunner is Julien Sorel. In *Ulysses*, Stephen is merely an artist-figure, not an artist. He is not engaged on any great work of art as such. His interest is in the creation of himself. Unlike Julien he has no astounding national history by which he can achieve self-definition. Where Julien craves relationship through action, Stephen contemplates its necessity inactively.

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COLLINS

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Julien était ivre d'ambition et non pas de vanité.

Mathilde wonders,

S'il y a une révolution, pourquoi Julien Sorel ne jouerait-il pas le rôle de Roland, et moi celui de Madame Roland?

Julien's Napoleonic image of himself is equalled by Stephen's Daedalan self-modelling; one has social and political overtones, the other classical and aesthetic ones. But the Napoleonic image only has force in a Revolutionary situation. France supplied that in good measure. For Stephen the only kind of revolution available to his consciousness was a theological, not a political one—heresy, in other words. As an artist therefore he was not simply a heretic. He was a Napoleon of art; an imperious magical Daedalus who overcame the uproar of the revolution, mastered it and stilled it into the perfect silence of his own magnificent personality. Thus *Ulysses* is a novel speckled with heretical references that co-exist with literary references in a sardonic collusion. Joyce has no French Revolution to look back on like Stendhal; he has no Nazi terror to face like Thomas Mann; but he has, in the heretical tradition of Catholicism, his own great image of disintegration which can be allied to his own and to his country's experience; and he has, in the English provincial novel, as in the Irish middle-class scene, the social unit in terms of which the disintegration can be both mirrored and viewed. Inevitably then, the family is parodied in *Ulysses*. Its renowned unity and bliss is to be exploited there for the purpose of giving shape to a sense of breakdown for which all European history provides the material.

CONCEIVING OF JOYCE in this way allows us to recognise him as the creator of a hero, Stephen, who occupies in modern European culture a position exactly half-way, morally speaking, between that of Julien Sorel and Adrian Leverkühn. Stephen's break with the acknowledged pieties of family life is, in terms of English fiction and Irish Catholicism, exactly like Leverkühn's break in *Dr Faustus* with traditional tonality in terms of the German musical tradition. Stephen's parody of the image of the family in the Trinity and the Holy Family is, like Leverkühn's parody of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in the cantata *The Lamentation of Dr Faustus*, an ironic exploitation of cultural and traditional images. If we remember that Leverkühn was to some extent at least modelled in his capacity as a musician on Arnold Schoenberg, the following remark by Mann has a sharp relevance:

> For there's no question about it: Music as well as the other arts—and not only the arts—is in a crisis which sometimes seems to threaten its very life. In literature that crisis is sometimes concealed by an ironic traditionalism. But Joyce, for example, to whom I am closer in some ways than might appear, is quite as outrageous to the mind trained in the classical romantic, realistic traditions as Schoenberg and his followers. Incidentally, I can't read Joyce either, if only because one has to be born into English culture to do so.

This seems true. English, not Irish, culture is important here, because it is fundamentally English culture, especially in its literary aspect, which is being parodied, even though the context is an Irish and European Catholic one.

So instead of Napoleon or Beethoven, Roland or Nietzsche, Joyce has God the Father or Shakespeare, Sabellius or Arius, Christ or Parnell as the figures against which his hero defines his relationship to all that surrounds and all that resides within him. Of course these cultural heroes whose names are totemistic operate in the various novels at a level of high irony or, sometimes, gross sarcasm. Comparisons with names like these are odious for provincial youths. Altamira's conversation, however, gives Julien a glimpse of the way by which the gap between an ideal and a mediocre reality might be leapt.

Faut-il voler, faut-il se vendre? pensa Julien. Cette question l'arrêta tout court. Il passa le reste de la nuit à lire l'histoire de la Révolution.

In the first chapter of *Ulysses*, Stephen allows the witty but shallow Irishman, Mulligan, and the dull Englishman, Haines, to expound mock-versions of his programme in self-definition, thus escaping mockery himself by his usual tactic of a silence which satirises them by its implicit refusal to commit itself to words, even while acknowledging that the words of others are fair approximations. So we have Mulligan talking about Hamlet and Shakespeare and algebra to make fun of Haines; and Haines making fun of himself by talking about "The Father and the Son idea. The Son striving to be atoned with the Father," while Mulligan finally sings the ballad of Joking Jesus which incorporates the same kind of relationship. The humour reflects on the subsidiary characters; the implicit seriousness of the enterprise is preserved, by his weary hauteur, with Stephen. And in *Dr Faustus*, the same kind of cross-referencing between, for example, Christ, Beethoven, the Garden of Gethsemane, and Adrian's bitter "sleep in peace" in the *Lamentation*, is developed for the same ironic-tragic effect. It is, indeed, noticeable that each of these diabolic heroes, Julien, Stephen and Adrian, is not only set against more traditional but ineffectual characters like Monsieur de la Mole, Bloom, and Zeitblom, but that each also has a Mephistophelean comrade like Altamira, Mulligan or Adrian's very real devil (whose demonism

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is refracted through a variety of subsidiary characters like Breisacher). In this intermediate personality we see tradition debased and revolution vulgarised. The hero can thus, by simple contrast and satirical commentary, appear the more formidable by having the inherent weaknesses of his position absorbed by someone else. There is a kind of undergraduate insolence and cleverness natural to Stephen's attitude, but Mulligan bears the blame for most of it.

Ulysses has the parodied family as its central metaphor and the stream-of-consciousness as its central technique. The two naturally have a close relationship. But first, it is worth looking at the various deformations to which the traditional family unit is subjected by Joyce. Stephen's family is broken. He has betrayed his mother and been betrayed, or at least disillusioned, by his father. He regards himself as a son who must create his own parents, since his actual parents, and Ireland and Catholicism, his symbolic parents, are unsatisfactory. He is a heretic in the sense that he conceives of (literally) the child-parent relationship in a non-traditional manner. Hence his links with Photius, Valentine, Arius, Sabellius, all of them heretics with respect to the dogmatically accepted relationship between God the Father and God the Son. This theological question of the Trinity is itself parodied on the human level by the relations between the members of the Holy Family.

—Qui vous a mis dans cette fichue position?
—C'est le pigeon, Joseph.

The pigeon, or dove, representing the Holy Ghost, and inspiration, links both the Trinity and the Holy Family, *via* the bird image, which is reminiscent of Daedalus and his son Icarus, to the artist who is parent to his own work. The Word takes flesh, the inspired artist or Virgin gives birth to a cultural hero like Christ or Icarus or Hamlet. And, of course, as there is a sense in which Christ is his own father, theologically speaking, so is Hamlet his own father artistically speaking. Consequently the image which grows out of the multiple parodies of family relationship is that of the embryonic growth of the artist, of literary tradition, of Mrs Purefoy's baby, of heretical tradition to the point where parturition is achieved and we are presented with the finished thing . . . the work of art, the epic myth crystallised around the Icarian, Christ-like hero, Stephen.

THAT IS LARGELY Stephen's view of the situation, not Joyce's. For Bloom is also a member of a family which suffers breakdown. He is a father who has lost a son, a husband who

ANDRÉ DEUTSCH

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has lost a wife, a Jew who has lost his homeland, his tradition, his own father through suicide and apostasy. He is a son without a father, and a father without a son. He is Christ and Joseph simultaneously, but not continuously for he is unable to grasp the various relationships in which he has become entwined. Yet although the patterns are blurred to him the substance of relationship, sympathy, is in his possession. With Stephen, the reverse is true. He sees all the patterns but understands them to be founded upon a void into which he might sink:

> A father, Stephen said, battling against hopelessness, is a necessary evil. He wrote the play in the months that followed his father's death. If you hold that he, a greying man with two marriageable daughters, with thirtyfive years of life, *nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*, with fifty of experience, is the beardless undergraduate from Wittenberg then you must hold that his seventyyear old mother is the lustful queen. No. The corpse of John Shakespeare does not walk the night. From hour to hour it rots and rots. He rests, disarmed of fatherhood, having devised that mystical estate upon his son. Boccaccio's Calandrino was the first and last man who felt himself with child. Fatherhood, in the sense of conscious begetting, is unknown to man. It is a mystical estate, an apostolic succession, from only begetter to only begotten. On that mystery and not on the madonna which the cunning Italian intellect flung to the mob of Europe the church is founded and founded irremovably because founded, like the world, macro- and microcosm upon the void. Upon incertitude, upon unlikelihood. *Amor matris*, subjective and objective genitive, may be the only true thing in life. Paternity may be a legal fiction. Who is the father of any son that any son should love him or he any son?

This passage seems central. Generally, we are told that Bloom is the true hero of *Ulysses* because of his seeking for relation, his sympathy and his final reconciliation with Molly after the meeting with Stephen. Such a reading has undoubtedly its persuasive aspects, but it does not satisfactorily explain the fact that Bloom's relationships are all abortive, even if touchingly so; and it leaves Molly's soliloquy high and dry at the end of the novel, an unnecessary appendix to Bloom's triumph. But if instead we think of Bloom as a sympathetic man who is defeated—let's not make too much of that breakfast in bed—the novel assumes a more ample and satisfying shape. The defeat is at least pathetic, almost tragic, certainly complete. For the father has found no son, the son no father. The myth of the madonna, the virginal chastity so grotesquely epitomised in Gerty McDowell, is rejected. There is no Holy Family myth re-established in a bourgeois setting here. Instead we have a negotiated and calculated peace between the middle-class Jew and his Irish wife. The family unit does not exist except in comic terms. It is replaced by the Trinity in which each man is his own father, each man is, like Stephen, *sui generis*, alone and doomed, if he is to be fully human, to realise himself by giving birth to a full conception of himself as artist does to hero. The Trinity and Shakespeare and Daedalus are analogues for Stephen's search for a rationale and a technique by which he might realise his own identity. This is the novel's concern and this concern surely explains its executive brilliance. The form of the novel is a disruption of the linear form assumed by the bourgeois familial novel of the Victorian era. Its various complicated and cinematic techniques are devoted to the elucidation of a new experience of what appears from the familial point of view to be a diabolical resolve to live alone, but is in fact not so much a choice as a necessity. How after all, do Bloom and Stephen part? Like men in a Beckett novel:

> Standing perpendicular at the same door and on different sides of its base, the lines of their valedictory arms, meeting at any point and forming any angle less than the sum of two right angles.

Bloom remains to feel "the cold of interstellar space," remember the dead, see the dawn, bump his head on re-entering the house and so on. Stephen has gone. We are in a world of objects, bowing again under the hailstorm of data, remembered and freshly experienced, a comic, gargantuan and meaningless world. Only Molly's delight in the processes of love and femaleness, delight in fecundity itself, is left. But the delight is without a goal unless Stephen can contrive one for it. Bloom cannot.

THE CATECHISM of the Ithaca chapter takes the naturalism of the 19th-century novel to the point where it becomes a parody of itself. Malraux has a fine phrase for this sort of thing when he is talking about the cinema: "Photography . . . has no scope for fiction." By this he means that the simple recording of what happens is futile. It does not constitute art because it denies the possibility of structure. Editing is what makes the film an art form, because it substitutes the artist's ordered meaning for the camera's orderly lack of it. But there are also techniques like that of the close-up or the long shot which break up the defined space of the photograph (still or moving) into different levels, so that there is a system of cross-referencing immediately available by means of which we can be presented with a complicated and continuous meaning.

Naturalism has been as native to the novel as to the film. Its inherent tendency towards documentary inertness, one well demonstrated at the close of the 19th century (Gissing and Zola), is evaded by Joyce even while he manages at the same time to retain all the sensory immediacy which naturalism was able to grant. He did this,

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of course, by his adoption of the stream-of-consciousness technique, whereby we are allowed to re-experience the exact effect of what the characters experience while, at the same time, by the breaking of levels or cross-referencing, we understand its significance more fully than they can. Stephen and Bloom each represent the extremes towards which Joyce's techniques tend to veer. Stephen is forever speaking in terms of a patterned, Bloom in terms of a patternless, experience. Both, of course, are caught in the total fiction. R. P. Blackmur described its formal tension best, perhaps, when he spoke of Stephen's gesture of aesthetic disdain as a means of repudiating the world and Bloom's realistic description as a means of recovering it. The two movements are interlocked in a tension which we can casually ascribe to Joyce's love-hate relationship to Dublin, and more fully now perhaps to an attitude towards a cultural crisis which had overtaken his social class, leaving him to find a means of identity outside the decayed social frame into which he, like so many other Europeans, had been born.

But there is a paradox here. The stream-of-consciousness technique is reputedly one by means of which the author absents himself from his fiction—comparatively speaking at least. It is certainly held to be at one end of the narrative spectrum which is closed at the other by the convention of the omniscient author. This is the basis for Joseph Frank's discussion of Joyce in his essay on spatial form.

Yet a close reading of *Ulysses* does not support either Frank or the general idea of what the stream-of-consciousness method entails. One reason for this is, I believe, that Joyce uses the technique for largely satirical purposes and in doing so converts its renowned aims to others quite opposite. He differs from Dujardin, Richardson, Virginia Woolf, Thomas Wolfe, Faulkner and others in that he does not use the method straightforwardly by imitating the voice of his characters as he depicts their inner consciousness. He caricatures them. He uses them as a ventriloquist uses his dummy, pretending that they are speaking while at the same time letting us see how skilled he is to make us so believe. The consciousness of Gerty McDowell, for instance, is very cruelly caricatured by allowing her pap-fed romanticism to run its arc of desire like the rocket or like the Mass being said in the nearby chapel. Obviously she is not aware of these parallels. Bloom merely pronounces some of them. The author is the controlling agent here even while pretending not to be. Joyce is most present when apparently quite absent. The effect is the well-known satiric one generated by Swift on various occasions; the reader is lulled into

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thinking he is listening to the hack writer or to Gerty when in fact many signs in the narrative indicate Swift and Joyce. The whole secret is of course one of disguised tone, at which both authors are masters.

Even when the caricaturing intent has gone and we are in a more simply imitative situation, the system of different referential levels keeps the satiric bias prominent. Stephen is always being seen in the context of Bloom and Bloom in the context of Stephen, so that the author and reader enjoy an advantage over the character even while the pretence, the fiction, is that the reader is himself subject to the inconsequence of the character's consciousness. The stream-of-consciousness technique then is one which usually dwells on the random and minute or apparently minute detail. But in Joyce the detail is constantly controlled by the satirical purpose. The solipsism of the novel is not so much a peculiar characteristic of its people; it is representative of their state. This is the cultural phenomenon analysed by a narrative device which nevertheless insists that we recognise the degree to which solipsism has become a necessary assumption for the act of communication. Joyce plays up this paradox endlessly.

THE SATIRIC APPROACH he adopted in this novel gives it a formal coherence which is the result of great wealth of detail being married to multiple interpretative patterns in and through the nature of the main protagonists, Bloom and Stephen, and not imposed by any solemnising need on the author's part to defend a particular ideology or attitude. Again, the most immediate comparison would be with the persistent ironic tone that pervades Mann's work and lightens its massive structure by its fine tact and balance. Goethe's almost overpowering presence in *Lotte in Weimar* is restrained by the delicate mockery of the Goethean style in that novel. Shakespeare is not an overbearing presence in *Ulysses* because the context is always placing him into a dense pattern of popularisation, quotation, insult, biographical extravagance and humour.

The erudition displayed in the novel is also palatable because it is so consistently and often so comically functional. Joyce has had a more pervasive influence on the modern novel than has Mann because his treatment of isolation produced a hero who, in the various misreadings we give him, is an iconoclastic young rebel devoted to great and precise learning for the sake of expressing his sense of futility. He shows how bankrupt the tradition is by quoting time and again from its once solvent account to remind us that he knows what was. And what is. Stephen may be less attractive than Bloom but he is more of an object-lesson. He seems to prove that, in this apocalyptic situation, art is either the only effective therapy or possibly the only therapy, effective or not, although sympathy and pleasure are minor possibilities. Art as therapy creates virtuosity; one form of virtuosity is eccentric learning brought in from all points of the compass to a very highly defined and modern centre. In such a case, tone is all important. It must be maintained with the continuous delicacy which the overbearing weight of the material demands. Joyce was the first in a now respectably-old modern tradition to sustain this tone to the point of exhaustion.

John Barth has spoken of the literature of exhaustion as if it were a new genre. Perhaps it is. Joyce is certainly its presiding deity. Nabokov's displays of erudition and humour, Beckett's and Barth's constant ducking through epistemological hoops ripped from traditional barrels, Sartre's abandonment of literature for ideology, Borges, Robbe-Grillet, Nathalie Sarraute, all of them owe much to Joyce and the experimental movement which he began. The one common interest among them is the question of the nature and function of writing itself. Many novels have been written about the act of writing a novel. Some have followed Joyce in their awareness of the fact that a novel is a book and, as such, is condemned, like the dictionary or encyclopaedia, but to a lesser degree, to suffer the arbitrary serial nature of print itself. It is also a consistent feature of such writing that its formal controls are so self-conscious that they become a kind of game, one favourite variant of which is to pretend that one is playing without formal controls. The subjectivism of such works is so systematic that the result is an impression of severe impersonality—Beckett and Robbe-Grillet would be perhaps the best examples of this. But *Ulysses* is the earliest such example.

FINALLY, one has to take into account the kind of criticism which Joyce has provoked. It is as curious in relation to the main stream of critical writing as was *Ulysses* or *Finnegans Wake* to the main stream of the novel. But it is not a new criticism in any speculative sense. Indeed the kind of speculation one discovers in this field is of a biblical, exegetical kind, refining certain basic truths out of the text, reading anagramatically, acrostically, allegorically, anagogically. On the other hand there is the *Reader's Guide* sort of criticism, which is really a very elaborate and sometimes useful, sometimes inane, textual apparatus. What strikes one here is how expert the reader has become. We already talk glibly of Joyce experts, Proust

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experts and so on. Something is obviously both wrong and inevitable here. It is wrong because one senses the loss of distinction between the author and his public. Joyce becomes the preserve of his experts, not the property of the world public. In a beautiful essay, published in 1936, Walter Benjamin described this phenomenon in relation to film. One passage (in *Illuminations*) ran:

> Thus, the distinction between author and public is about to lose its basic character. The difference becomes merely functional; it may vary from case to case. At any moment the reader is ready to turn into a writer. As expert, which he has become willy-nilly in an extremely specialised work process, even if only in some minor respect, the reader gains access to authorship. In the Soviet Union work itself is given a voice. To present it verbally is a part of a man's ability to perform the work. Literary licence is now founded on polytechnic rather than specialised training and thus becomes common property.

The truth of this for Joyce criticism is all too apparent. His *Ulysses* is a complicated score that can be played in as many ways as there are conductor-experts—the Dublin expert, the Jesuit specialist, the classical-references, the literary allusions, the Irish history expert. Every reader is an expert in Joyce depending on the reader's speciality. This is not so much a tribute to Joyce's omnivorous knowledge as it is to the strange epic and yet democratic form of his work. It is, after all, the odyssey of a specialist, Stephen, and the *homme moyen sensuel,* Bloom.

It is a secret book and yet an open one, culminating with its fascinating formal propriety in a soliloquy which is also an interior monologue, a public and a private act simultaneously. We will continue to accumulate our specialist knowledge of what the text conceals.[1] But everything it conceals it also reveals if only we look long and sharply enough. Joyce is one of the liberators of the mass consciousness of the 20th century. He exmplifies it in its sympathetic inconsequence in Bloom and in its splintered but undeterred specialisms in Stephen. Their obsessions are ours, as they are Leverkühn's and Julien Sorel's. When all coherence is indeed gone, and the family, the revolution, the musical tradition have all been transmogrified into something else, what is to be done? Even to understand is not enough. One must live through the collapse, alone. The loneliness is the basis for pride; but it has its intolerable aspects. *Qu'on m'aime,* says *notre paysan, notre provincial. Qu'on m'aime.*

[1] See recent Joyce literature: Richard Ellmann, *Ulysses on the Liffey* (Faber & Faber, £3.50; Oxford University Press, N.Y., $6.95); Frank Budgen, *James Joyce and the Makirg of Ulysses and Other Writings* (Oxford University Press, £3.50, paper £1); and Anthony Burgess' forthcoming *Joyceprick* (André Deutsch).

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The Torso of Greatness

On Young Weizmann—By R. H. S. Crossman

IF CHAIM WEIZMANN was a man of prophetic vision he was also a calculating politician; if he was an austere scientist of great intellectual achievement he was also a shrewd businessman who could enjoy the fleshpots of material success. If services rendered were seldom forgotten neither were grudges. Generous to a defeated enemy for whom he felt respect he could be petty and vindictive to the ruck he despised. He had the magnanimity of the despot but it was often matched by the reckless exploitation of those dedicated to his service.

A man of all the talents he was also a man of all the passions, great and small. But by the time he reached maturity this wild variety of behaviour was kept under control not only by sheer will-power but also by an ironic detachment which prevented him tearing a passion to tatters, and by a rich streak of Jewish humour which enabled him to see the absurdity of all pretensions including his own. In public however this wonderful gaiety and irreverence was kept in strict control. All the public was shown were the qualities they had been taught to expect and revere. Only his intimates could appreciate the contrast between Weizmann the myth and Weizmann the man and so appreciate the real basis of his greatness.

But what were the beginnings of that greatness and how did they emerge? An investigation of the upbringing of great men and the sources of their greatness is never easy. If a statesman, for example, comes from a humble background there will often be no reliable written records and the few facts available will have been obscured by his own distorting hindsight as well as by the romantic saga with which the media usually provide the famous before they reach their middle age. This is certainly true in the case of Chaim Weizmann whose career is amply documented from the time of his visit to England in 1903. But almost the only literary source for his early life is his autobiography. Considering all the circumstances, *Trial and Error* (published 1949) was a notable literary and historic achievement—the dignified retrospect of an old and rather weary Jewish statesman, enlivened by a number of carefully observed pen-pictures of his fellow-Zionists as well as by lively but obviously oft-told anecdotes of his long political career. But Weizmann was already 67 when he completed the first draft of Book I, which takes us to the Balfour Declaration. When the completed work was finally revised in 1948 he was nearly blind and relying more and more on the research and drafting skill of the distinguished New York writer, Maurice Samuel. One had to assume that his recollections of home life in the Jewish Pale and of his University days in Germany and Switzerland had lost the jagged edges of actuality and been smoothed and rounded in the telling. But apart from the memories of his contemporaries, including his wife Vera, there was no means of checking or supplementing an old man's picture of far-off days.

The publication, therefore, of the first three volumes of his collected letters and papers is an event of some historical importance.[1] A vast archive has been amassed at Rehovot and apparently it was the intention of the editors to publish every scrap of what he wrote apart from his strictly scientific papers. The dimensions of the enterprise are indicated by the fact that these three volumes, which only cover the ill-documented period before he settled in Manchester, comprise 1400 large pages and each is equipped with an excellent introductory chapter summarising the events described as well as an elaborate apparatus of explanatory notes and appendices. The editors and publishers have both done an outstanding job. But whether an operation on this scale—it will run to 20 or more volumes—is worthwhile can be judged not unfairly from these first volumes.

I STARTED READING THEM in a somewhat sceptical mood but I am now convinced that—at least when we are dealing with this early period, where the evidence is so scanty—every letter, however formal, is worth printing in full and annotating with the care and scholarship here displayed. The editors have lovingly pieced together one part of the jigsaw and these three volumes present the first authoritative picture of Weizmann as he was in his twenties—at least as he revealed himself in his correspondence. Moreover, they reveal that there are important differences between the myth

[1] *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann.* General editor Meyer Weisgal. *Series A: Letters.* Vol. I: *Summer* 1885–*October* 1902. Edited by Leonard Stein in collaboration with Gedalia Yogev. (1968). Vol. II: 5 *November* 1902–*end August* 1903. Edited by Barnet Litvinoff in collaboration with Gedalia Yogev. (1971). Vol. III: *September* 1903–*December* 1904. Edited by Barnet Litvinoff. (1972). Oxford University Press, £3.15, £3.50, £3.50. Oxford University Press, New York, $10.25, $14.50, $14.50.

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of the past he laboriously dictated in the 1940s and the real man—the brilliant university lecturer who was also earning 3,000 marks a year by his chemical discoveries; the ambitious Zionist politician already plotting to challenge Herzl's leadership; and the ardent lover who had just switched his affections from a worthy Zionist comrade to a dashing, beautiful young medical student called Vera Khatzman with scarcely an idea what Zionism was about.

Disappointingly the letters tell us virtually nothing about school and undergraduate days. Letter 1 of Volume I is, of course, the famous epistle composed by the boy of 11 to the teacher who prepared him for admission to the Pinsk secondary school, and it ends with the words:

> "Let us carry our banner TO ZION AND RETURN TO OUR FIRST MOTHER UPON WHOSE KNEES WE WERE BORN.—For why should we look to the Kings of Europe for compassion that they should take pity upon us and give us a resting-place? In vain! All have decided: THE JEW MUST DIE, but England will nevertheless have mercy upon us. In conclusion to Zion! — Jews — to Zion! let us go."

Alas, it stands out like an obelisk in the desert. Extensive research has added only a few scraps to this school-boy pronouncement. Indeed the next letter of any significance is written nine years later—a note to his fellow student in Berlin, Leo Motzkin, desperately asking for the 20 marks he is owed for coaching. But then the letters begin to flow in a regular stream. Suddenly there emerges from the shadows the indigent, impetuous *Privatdozent*. We can at last check *Trial and Error* by some reliable contemporary evidence.

WHAT STRIKES ME on first reading is the combination of intellectual maturity and emotional instability that Weizmann at this period displays. As a chemist of brilliant promise he had already earned recognition in industry as well as in the university. In the Zionist movement he was already the highly articulate leader of a group of young radical intellectuals who repudiated the condescending philanthropy which inspired the Zionism of Western Jewry and, in particular, of Theodor Herzl. On the other hand they had no false illusions about life in the Pale whose intellectual and cultural standards they despised. But at least it was authentically Jewish and they sought to conserve the best of it and give it a national coloration. For these young radicals were convinced that the return to Zion must be a national movement of Russian Jews, and they resented the suggestion in all Herzl's writings that what is needed was a rescue operation designed to find somewhere outside the Pale an asylum for an outcast people.

The mere facts about Weizmann's earliest political activities were already well-known. After the Fourth Zionist Congress he challenged Herzl's leadership and earned his disapproval by organising the Democratic Fraction—the first political party within Zionism. He also helped to set up a publishing house in Berlin and launched a campaign for a Jewish University to be established in the first instance somewhere in Europe. His lodgings in Geneva became the office and party headquarters. Indeed a large number of these early letters are circulars, desperate appeals for renewed subscriptions or complaints that leaders of the groups he had succeeded in establishing were failing to report their activities.

What is remarkable is the frantic ups-and-downs of this correspondence. Now Weizmann is on top of the world assuring his correspondents of progress—which only too often has not yet been achieved. Now he is bullying them mercilessly for their shortcomings, and now—even more frequently—he is trying to extract some signs of life from an obviously inactive group by self-pitying descriptions of the mental and physical collapse with which he is threatened by the thankless task he has taken on. Even his closest friends are constantly subjected to this alternating bombardment of moral reprobation and piteous appeals; and his new fiancée, whenever she goes home to Rostov on Don, suffers worst of all. Poor girl, the posts were irregular and the censorship arbitrary. Yet only a day had to pass without a letter from Vera before her

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lover launched into a torrent of rebuke and self-commiseration. In this particular case emotional upheaval was no doubt partly caused by the guilt he felt at breaking off his first engagement. Nevertheless, the uncontrolled shrillness of all this correspondence which might have been natural in a student is surprising when we remember that Weizmann was by now getting on for 30.

It is not difficult to discover from these letters that the cause of Weizmann's emotionalism was his growing sense of failure. He already saw with astonishing clarity what was wrong with Herzl's leadership and what revolution in policies and organisation was necessary to put it right. He had evolved the philosophy which needed to be preached: he knew exactly what needed to be done. Yet every instrument which he shaped to the achievement of these ends seemed to break in his hands. The leadership of the Democratic Fraction split, and the local groups melted away as soon as they were formed. After months of weary effort the periodical which was to carry the message of practical Zionism and create the organic unity between Western and Eastern Jewry was never published for lack of funds. The campaign for the Jewish University was overtaken and overwhelmed by the impact of the Kishineff pogrom (1903). Every one of the enterprises he had evolved and organisations he had created for reforming Zionism and providing himself with a position of political power inside the movement collapsed.

WEIZMANN'S PERSONAL CRISIS came to a head in the summer of 1903 when Joseph Chamberlain's Uganda offer split the Zionist movement and 178 nay-sayers walked out of the Congress at Basle. Weizmann was in a torment. At first he wavered and saw merits in the proposal. Then, when he felt the violence of the reaction of the Eastern delegates, he saw the chance of playing a leading role in the opposition to Herzl's leadership. His election to the East Africa Commission gave him his opportunity. Though he knew little English, he would beard the British statesmen in their den and obtain the ammunition with which the opposition could blow the Uganda proposal to smithereens.

THE MOST INTERESTING LETTERS in these first volumes are those in which Weizmann gives Vera his first impressions of London in that thrilling October week. He writes:

> I arrived today in this monstrous London, and have hardly managed to do a thing. . . . I have been rushing about madly, and there is slush here, foul weather, fog, din and uproar, and a language which is not exactly comprehensible to me. . . . I am now in Whitechapel. Lord, what a horror! Stench, foul smells, emaciated Jewish faces.

But twenty-four hours makes a change. The next letter begins:

> In contrast to yesterday—a most unpleasant day—today all went well. The sun has smiled and all my people have responded. . . . I am terribly pleased that I went to London, terribly pleased. I feel very well today. Tomorrow I shall buy the picture postcards I haven't had time for, and start sending them to you.

Considering he was an unknown Russian Jew who spoke little English, the achievements of this journey were remarkable. With the help of Dr Gaster he was able to see the Enoch Powell of the day, Evans-Gordon, who introduced him to Sir Harry Johnston, the Special Commissioner in Uganda. After only a week he tells Vera that his mission is coming to an end and that he has already

> reached the inescapable conclusion that Africa has already collapsed. . . . Darling, I have never in my life felt so well as here. It is not without reason that I was striving to get here. This is the hub of the world and, really, you sense the breathing of a giant, the city of cities.

He was on top of the world, when on his return to Geneva he sent his first report on his visit to Ussishkin, the Russian leader for whom he had great respect. In this he summarised succinctly the arguments against the practicability of Uganda and a few days later followed it up with a powerful analysis of the difference between the Zionism of Theodor Herzl and that of the Democratic Fraction:

> One group conceives of Zionism as a mechanism, and is ignorant of its connection with the soul of the Jewish people. Consequently it seeks to "manufacture" Zionism either through diplomatic journeys or through fund-raising appeals. Elements are partly detached from living Judaism—the assimilated Westerners on the one side, and the Orthodox confined with their rigid formulae on the other, are incapable of a better understanding of the national cause.
>
> The other group, however, understands Zionism to be the life-giving force, both actual and potential: the free development of the nation finding its highest expression in the idea of statehood. . . . The propagation of Zionism must accord with a uniform principle. Zionism is a national movement, and it can in no sense be conceived as an activity on behalf of the suffering brethren in the East. The first consequence of this principle is that Zionism considers its whole mission to be the furtherance of all activities that contribute to the creation of Jewish national values.

This euphoria did not last long. A few days later he was writing to Feiwel (the father of T. R. Fyvel), one of his dearest personal friends:

> I keep getting a mood, and it's growing within me at this moment, intensifying into a feeling of despair. We shan't achieve anything, because we are all people with frayed nerves. Vainly, absolutely vainly, I have taken the trouble during the past weeks to travel around, write letters, worry about all kinds of things, for I cannot count on a scrap of support anywhere. I have to do everything myself, at my own risk and with my own money—which I haven't got.

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And in another letter he adds:

> I shall try and shake the dust from my feet. I don't want to be bothered with dead souls. The youth are as rotten as old men.

As the winter went on his depression deepened until in December he wrote to Martin Buber, who was later to be known as the eminent theologian:

> I can no longer bear this condition of being crushed while my closest friends do not have a like degree of responsibility and, perhaps quite unconsciously, shift the greatest responsibility on to me. I cannot help feeling bitter about standing completely alone, as though abandoned, at critical moments: "We march together" only when everything works out well . . . I too have made a resolve that, if only for reasons of health, I must fulfil: after the Fraction Conference I am not going to lift a finger any more. I shall no longer accept any office. After ten years work, after five years of grinding, all-consuming activity, I too wish to have at least one year to myself. I owe it to my family. I have never spoken like this, but now that I see that after everything one is really alone I cannot act otherwise.

ONCE AGAIN, THE CORRESPONDENCE MAKES CLEAR what had happened. He had hoped as the result of his first London visit not merely to provide the evidence with which the nay-sayers from Russia could defeat Herzl in their confrontation but to achieve the leadership to which he had always aspired. But the Russians showed him small regard. First, they refused to inform him of what happened in their meeting with Herzl on the ground that the proceedings were confidential. Then, in the spring, after planning an ambitious propaganda tour of the main Russian communities, he reached home in Pinsk to discover there was no money available and the tour was off. Weizmann was a proud man and his humiliation was terrible. On 14 April he writes to Vera:

> Of course I shall work, Verochka, I shall work wherever fate takes me, for only cruel egoists who have silenced any voice of honour and conscience in themselves can fail to work for the Jewish cause. I have met such people here as well: always satiated, always arrogantly self-satisfied, people who represent the nadir of demoralisation. I do not understand what moral force has prevented the Jewish masses from attacking them. One is compelled to marvel at the great moral force that lives in the hungry Jew. In such conditions others would have turned into beasts long ago!

And a day or two later he says goodbye to a Russian friend on his way back to the West:

> I held myself *zur Verfügung* of our comrades but evidently my work will not be needed here now. I am leaving Russia with a broken heart. I am deeply sorry that I could not do some work, see my friends and at least somewhat ease the burden that weighs on my heart. But perhaps we shall meet in better times.

In the course of his October visit to London he had made some preliminary soundings about work in Britain and learnt that Professor Perkin in Manchester might find room for him in his lab. But his mind was still not made up. Early in May he was suddenly told that a humble job was vacant at the Teachers Training College under the Jewish-German Relief Organisation in Jerusalem. At once he applied and told Ussishkin on the same day that he would accept this post and

> feel myself the luckiest of mortals and it seems to me that this would also be very beneficial for our cause.

But insult was piled on insult, and a few weeks later it had been reported to Ussishkin that he had been refused the job because of his "impertinent" behaviour to Herzl. A few weeks later Herzl suddenly died. While publicly lamenting the loss, Weizmann writes to Vera "I feel a heavy burden has fallen on my shoulders." He at once started on his second visit to England that year, and it not only assured him of a job at Manchester University but restored his self-confidence. No wonder. Within a few days of his arrival in London he had, thanks to Evans-Gordon's good offices, had a long talk with the Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, Earl Percy, and the Superintendent of the African Protectorates, Sir Clement Hill. That he was taken seriously as a negotiator was indicated by the willingness of both to approve an agreed text of the talks. Weizmann had discovered his real *métier*, that of a diplomat. He writes to Vera:

> I must tell you that I am very suitable for the diplomatic corps. Though it's a pity I have neither an army nor a fleet to back me up.

And again:

> I have in fact assumed the role of some kind of self-styled diplomat of the Russian Zionists to the British Government. The only trouble is that they don't even give me money for stamps, and I have to write my fingers down to the bone with long letters and bureaucratic reports.

IN *Trial and Error* the picture we get is that of a resolute man firmly making the decision to give up politics for the time being and concentrate on his scientific career:

> My flight to England, in 1904, was a deliberate and desperate step. It was not, to be sure, real flight; it was in reality a case of *reculer pour mieux sauter*. . . We had reached, it seemed to me, a dead point in the movement. My struggles were destroying me; an interval was needed before the possibilities of fruitful work could be restored. . . . To become effective in any sense I had to continue my education in chemistry and wait for a more propitious time in the Zionist movement.

As so often memory has improved on reality. Weizmann has forgotten that he made two journeys to Britain. He telescopes his memories of them, gives no account of the snubs and humi-

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liations he had experienced in Russia, and omits to mention his failure to get the Jerusalem job.

The truth as revealed by the *Letters* is less noble and a good deal more human. They show that the prime motives for the move were, first, injured pride and, secondly, the recognition that a University chemist living in Switzerland, however strong his roots in the Pale, could neither represent Russian Jewry nor achieve a commanding position in the Western communities. Another reason for the move, which he does not mention, was the influence of Vera. Some months previously he had suggested to her that he would throw up his mixture and concentrate on Zionist propaganda. To this Vera had replied:

> By giving up chemistry, you would deprive yourself of a means of subsistence, without which unfortunately one cannot survive. Surely you do not intend to take Jewish money? You could never reconcile yourself to that. And once you give up chemistry, you'll find it difficult to return to it later. The whole matter is so involved that I can't even discuss it. My one wish is that you never give up chemistry. Kohan-Bernstein wore himself out in the Jewish cause, only for people to say, "He's getting paid for it!" I think you could arrange things differently.

For once Weizmann accepted his fiancée's advice. From that moment he realised that a World Zionist movement, capable of creating a Jewish State in Palestine, must be led by someone financially independent of the Zionist Congress; and the right place in which to achieve that financial independence seemed to be Britain. That is why, instead of abandoning Zionist activities when he settled in Britain (as *Trial and Error* suggests), he very soon began with careful deliberation to build up the position of power inside British Jewry which would enable him years later to negotiate the Balfour Declaration.

HAVING READ RIGHT THROUGH to the end of Volume III I can already see the intellectual framework of Weizmann's Zionism fully articulated. By 1904 there was nothing youthful or immature about either his philosophy or his political strategy. But in terms of personality he was still an unbalanced—indeed an uprooted—intellectual, arrogantly sure of his ideas but only half-sure of himself; a would-be leader very much aware of his spell-binding powers who had been recently forced to realise that if he could attract a following he still lacked the authority to retain it.

To use one his own favourite words, Weizmann was still something of a *Luftmensch*. In these letters we can already recognise most of the individual qualities which will make him the prophet and the leader of his own people. This

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young Jew from the Pale, whose favourite reading is Nietzsche, has a mighty will to power for himself and for his people; but it has not yet been hardened in the fire. As a result he still lacks the patience, the ironic detachment, and the quiet authority which will later enable him to exert a unique spell on so many dominant personalities in the British ruling class. When he arrived in England Weizmann's character was still rough-hewn, waiting to be shaped by destiny. But already the torso of greatness was beginning to emerge.

To Still History

By Douglas Dunn

POSTERITY is hardly a notion that young poets should be much bothered with. At the same time, there is certainly private delight in attempting to live up to the self-evident fact that the true poems of an age survive the excesses of history and criticism and continue to be read long after their authors' lifetimes and all they stood for have passed into the pages of contemporary Toynbees, Plumbs, Kenyons and Trevor-Ropers.

If Modernism extended one crusading belief that is still amenable to effective restatement it is that those who would write poems must realise that there is poetry in modern life. This could never be said to have been a prescription for subdued technique or emphatic realism. Nor was it a means to abandon "tradition" and make a fresh start. It was a revolution of modifications and extensions, a significant redirection pushed by the genius of Eliot and Pound.

It seems to me that the situation of contemporary poetry is again much as it was in the 1910s, at any rate in England if not in America. Poetry is bedevilled by "popular" reputations such as those of Adrian Henri and Roger McGough—who are the Noyses, Watsons and Newbolts—or Brian Patten, a Rupert Brooke without patriotism; and, as well as these, poets such as Barry MacSweeney, who are attracted to the example of Pound without possessing the intelligence to innovate: instead, they entrench themselves behind a pose representative of imitated literary beliefs.

Poetry is now being seen to reflect the moral and social allegiances, the fragmented patterns of modern life. There seems to be a primary effort among poets to live up to the expectations of groups peripheral to poetry, of which the general public is one. Some poets intent on performance behave as if they had taken Arnold Bennett's advice to heart: "Get down to facts, my son, and study your market." Poetry as an independent, continuing embodiment of feeling, essentially of the age in which it is written, the latest manifestation of itself and intuitively related to its past, is clearly not what poets intent on popularity have in mind.

Derek Mahon, John Fuller, James Fenton, Michael Schmidt and William Plomer, of those reviewed here, direct their efforts at the art of making poems, at perceiving the apt and important subjects of contemporary poems—in fact, at finding poetry in contemporary life. Reading their poems, one cannot fail to notice that in each case the desire to be elegant—sometimes treading to the verge of *dandyisme*—is pulled back by the pressure of realities. They are skilful, precise, witty, inventive; more importantly, they are individual. They are sufficiently intelligent to make their own answers; they are uninterested in confirming the received ideas of a faction. Their attitude to the line of British poetry is responsible and not imitative; they are open to the literatures of other languages; they are learned in ways useful to the making of poems; they are concerned with what it is to be a poet and to be alive in 1972; they understand that a poet must create moral originality, and say what other people can't or won't say, in ways that reflect the traditional methods of poetry and make it what it is.

Derek Mahon's first book—*Nightcrossing*—was for the most part metrical, and even if its flaws were moderately graceful, it tended at times toward whimsy and preciosity. *Lives*[1] is much harder, his vision is more aggressive, the result of growing older while Belfast burns. Mahon is a Northern Irishman; and one who has had the courage to kick its murk from his heels. Several poems are desperately committed to what a poet ought to say and feel, confronted with such stark manifestations of upheaval, as in "Rage for Order":

[1] *Lives*. By DEREK MAHON. Oxford University Press, 90p.

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Somewhere beyond
The scorched gable end
And the burnt-out
Buses there is a poet indulging his
Wretched rage for order—

Or not as the
Case may be, for his
Is a dying art,
An eddy of semantic scruple
In an unstructurable sea.

The ragged line-endings are disappointing; the poem is approximately syllabic, but I ask the question "Why?" Like other poems here, "Rage for Order" is spoken by a character, in this case a victim or participant of disorder. His condemnation of the poet is severe:

He is far
From his people,
And the fitful glare
Of his high window is as
Nothing to our scattered glass.

His posture is
Grandiloquent and
Deprecating, like this,
His diet ashes,
His talk of justice and his mother

The rhetorical
Device of a Claudian emperor—
Nero if you prefer,
No mother there;
And this in the face of love, death and the wages of the poor.

The bitter admission that the speaker's manner also is grandiloquent and deprecating is a valuable effect: the poet's withdrawal is justified in the same terms as the bomber's activity. It is the creative art of the poet that the politically-motivated speaker envies. The man who tears down, who makes history through violent events, ends by saying

. . . it cannot be
Long now till I have need of his
Germinal ironies.

Mahon's language is obviously clean and precise; what one hesitates to compliment is his way of making lines and verses, working in almost-rhymes that can be seen but not heard.

Ulster is never specifically evoked. Mahon returns to "a dark country/Beyond appraisal or report." His ordering of images suggests that, in the landscape of his poems, Ulster is only an insistent fragment, a catalyst to a broader vision, assisted here by Cavafy.

Now it is night
And the barbarians have not come.
Or if they have we only recognize,
Harsh as a bombed bathroom,
The frantic anthropologisms
And lazarous ironies

Behind their talk
Of fitted carpets, central
Heating and automatic gear-change—
Like the bleached bones of a hare
Or a handful of spent
Cartridges on a rifle range.

His vision is bleakest in "An Image from Beckett", "Lives", "What will Remain" and "Entropy", strange poems in which the cosmic and rootedly essential, the archaeological and anthropological, are mixed with the flotsam of contemporary life, the rubbish of survival.

CANNIBALS AND MISSIONARIES[2] is John Fuller's third book. What he has gathered in skill he seems intent on reducing by being mandarin, chasing after a personal *summum bonum* of rhyme and metre. He is, at 33, the indisputable master of all poets under 40 (and most over) in matters of traditional versifying with confidence. He sometimes reads like a poet of inclination rather than necessity; it's almost as if some of his poems at least are the result of a failure to resist yet another exercising of his remarkable technique, like a gigolo who doesn't like the girl but is, well, a gigolo. . . . Pressure of feeling in his work always seems distant. Emotional intensity as a requirement of contemporary poems has been overstated; even so, Fuller's poems are too cool. It would hardly do to advise a poet to reveal more of his private life; I merely note the fact that Mr Fuller has thought it unwise or unnecessary to do this.

Several poems are poised over personal crises to a greater extent than my remarks indicate. In these, significantly enough, he subdues his formalist passions, and is more concerned with proving the truth of observations and confrontations with sights and feelings. This may be chancing my arm with too thumping a generalisation; but I think it is preferable for a contemporary poet to prove his authority from personal experience, rather than impress with ingeniously and perfectly made surfaces and outsides of poems.

Fuller is not a show-off; but he does reach the point where displays of skill attain the appearance of bad taste. If this behaviour is a reaction to sloppy standards, it is a bad reaction. An example is "The Labours of Hercules", a sonnet sequence

[2] *Cannibals and Missionaries*. By JOHN FULLER. Secker & Warburg, £1·50, paper 95p.

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in which the 15th sonnet is composed entirely of the first lines of the preceding 14, and each sonnet begins with the last line of the one before. It reads like a game played out of dedication, a poem about the labours of Fuller as well as Hercules, and perhaps about the life of art. Enthralling technical wizardry of that order is not altogether a waste of effort, but my suspicion is that it comes dangerously close to intricate fiddling while the world burns.

There are enough examples to show that Fuller finds poetry in modern life. What I consider the best poem in the book—"Her Morning Dreams"—proves this. A monologue by a woman attempting to begin again after the finish of a brief but important affair, it gives Fuller opportunity to use colloquial language important not for the formal excellence in which it is contained, but because the subject is of the present time, the role of the character assumed with powerful imagination.

In the pugnaciously sub-Augustan long sprint of "The Art of Love", he surveys contemporary erotic manners. The iambic tetrameters are incisive; but he is sometimes cynical, too "normal" and well-balanced. The style of Auden's *New Year Letter* was probably Fuller's model, and he is recognisably present in the acceptable conclusion of the poem:

Love has no watch, no train to catch,
No lingering, no plot to hatch;
It is the current not the cog,
It is itself, no pedagogue:
Love's unseen affirmative
Is all the teaching it can give.

Just as inventive, and even more dashing with his sense of humour, is James Fenton, a mere boy of 23. Fenton works for the front half of the *New Statesman*, and is said by the blurb to be a member of International Socialism. He has kept this from the part of him that writes poems; *Terminal Moraine*[3] is uncommitted and affable. His most concerned poem is "Our Western Furniture", a a sequence of sonnets which won the Newdigate Prize when he was 19, dramatising the American intrusion on Japan in the 1850s. On the evidence of a poem like "The Kingfisher's Boxing Gloves", Mr Fenton seems to be a cross between a Parisian dandy and the heavyweight champion of Oxford. This poem has been praised in another paper for its obscurity. The poet notes for us that

[3] *Terminal Moraine*. By JAMES FENTON. Secker & Warburg, £1·50, paper 95p.

A

THE GREATNESS OF FLAUBERT

Maurice Nadeau

Translated by Barbara Bray

"... I am still reading it, deliberately prolonging the reading because of my intense enjoyment of the book ... life and literature blend so marvellously. Every page is exciting. I have marked the book on almost every page, it seems, and underlined scores of passages... I only wish I could recommend it at one sweep to the whole wide world."

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it has come "from the French." It has in fact been rendered from Mr Fenton's French: the poem was written in that language and then brought back to English. Brilliant? Fatuous? The fatuousness of brilliance? I'm not sure which. There can be no doubt, however, about the poem's pleasing accuracies:

Along its teeth, black as an upright grand,
The mastik bird performs its dentistry.

More satisfying is "The Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford", a poem about "the fabled lands where myths/Go when they die . . ." or "this boxroom of the forgotten or hardly possible." Fenton uses the grotesque or strange exhibits—a musical whip, a dowser's twig—as catalysts to his sense of humour; but the poem transforms the museum and its chaotic piles of souvenirs into a darker place—where "The lonely and unpopular/Might find the landscapes of their childhood marked out. . . ." The moral drama which a reader might experience in the poem—partly the result of cadence as well as imagery—is taken a step further:

Go
In groups to giggle at curious finds.
But do not step into the kingdom of your promises
To yourself, like a child entering the forbidden
Woods of his lonely playtime:

That simile is used with mastery. It brings all the atmosphere built up throughout the poem suddenly to bear on the poem's true subject—self-delusion through imagination. A poem of this length on that theme would work hard to avoid being a moral tract. At an early age, Fenton already knows how to handle the standard but always difficult moral subjects with originality.

Fenton is clearly "influenced" by Auden, especially later Auden. Easily identifiable Auden touches can be seen in "Pitt-Rivers Museum"—rhythm, syntax, and, in "South Parks Road", the shape of the stanza as well as some of its details:

When they have completed its re-edification
And eradicated the tell-tale traces of its former
Yellow-bricked Gothic style, when the lease has
run out for
The Commonwealth Services Club, when the nuns
From St Frideswide's Cherwell Edge

Gather like swallows whistling on the telegraph wires,
Why will I be bothering with my homunculus?

He has immense potential, but the "Open Letter to Richard Crossman" in shaky *ottava rima* is an ominous sign; his talent seems to me the kind that could be swindled out of fulfilment by too much journalism, of which light verse can be a part. His effort to sound genial and wise makes him sound a thousand years old; and his displays of erudition, the cultural glee with which he seizes the recherché or historical, remove him almost as far as it is possible to go from the kind of subject he deals with interestingly in the *New Statesman*. But what he has written so far is enough to make *Terminal Moraine* one of the most interesting débuts for many years.

ALTHOUGH HE HAS less wit, less boldness, and a less energetic response to what he confronts in his poems, Michael Schmidt's fresh, accurate descriptions[4] indicate a scrupulous involvement with contemporary life that aligns him with Mahon, Fuller and Fenton. His worst fault at present is to thin out poems with non-lines—"but maybe thistles simply"—and clichés—"They leave a field bare/as a threadbare carpet". These occasional slips are adequately compensated for by examples of the real writing he is more likely to continue producing. For example, the first lines of "Underwater":

Underwater, this is the cathedral
sea. Diving, our bubbles rise
as prayers are said to do, and burst
into our natural atmosphere—
occupying, from this perspective,
the position of a heaven.

This is successful both pictorially and as a means to suggesting the religion and sense of guilt within which the events of the poem are enacted.

Occasionally, the writing is too casual to coexist with the strength of the dramas he attempts to convey. His language wavers between art and conversation. He overcomes the tendency merely to report his travels with the taut "Bird Vendor", and with "Funerals." In "Desert of the Lions" he gives his imagination more freedom than he normally allows it, to splendid effect:

Substantial for a moment,
immovable as stones, we whisper
to the things we cannot touch,

to still history, to the twilight
impervious as stars.

His Mexican characters, landscapes and concerns bring unusually fresh subjects to contemporary poems, and at their best are far from the heightened Johnny Morris-isms which many poets indulge in when they take their Muse abroad. Schmidt's next step must be to sustain the good language he derives from observation without ancillary chat.

[4] *Desert of the Lions*. By MICHAEL SCHMIDT. Carcanet Press, £1.50, paper 75p.

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THE LIVERPOOL POETS are perhaps by now so rich they have become incorrigible. Adrian Mitchell once wrote a poem "Lord Home earns £5000 a Year": it might be time he and the Liverpool clique declared their bank balances. Both Adrian Henri and Roger McGough have been vaunted as *verlorene Feldwächter* at the outer bounds of innovation. This I find beyond belief. Their only experiment is to see how close they can get to an audience without actually reading to a full house of reproductions of themselves. They write coterie poems, exclusive to the tastes of people like themselves, a phratry of minds so alike it is not speaking at all but back-slapping across the membranes. They are small-town, demotic Mantovanis, endorsing sentiments and expectations they have no need to create.

Adrian Henri has written memorable poems in the past. "The Entry of Christ into Liverpool" still strikes me as genuine. *Autobiography*[5], however, surrenders to wilful over-impressionism, great mouthfuls of subjective blur. Robert Frost once said, "A little of anything goes a long way in a work of art", and there is a great deal here that only Mr Henri should be interested in wallowing in. The poem is written in hysterical conversation; style is reduced to quirks, especially an inane habit of compounding words to make special notions, such as "Saturdaynight", "trafficsigns", "yellowgreen", "bluecarpeted", "redandwhite". If this is Making It New, or Getting Across to the People in the Pub, youcankeepit.

Henri and McGough intuitively represent an unliterary principle of making poems—doing without formal control, subordinating craft to "delivery", effect, immediacy, clarity of intention; experience or testimony seem to be used only to endorse the social attitudes they represent and share with their audience. Public poetry or poetry for the people, or poetry that seeks not to ignore most people, does, perhaps, have to be that way. But if following the natures of those to whom the poems are offered means a poetry without a sense of infinitude, with no sense of humanity at its widest, unconscious of ideal states, emphasising only specific injustices, it had better not be done at all.

McGough is a slight poet; but there is no denying his occasional successes, as in "Railings", marred only by the juvenile "allover":

[5] *Autobiography*. By ADRIAN HENRI. Jonathan Cape, £1·50, paper 60p.

Jorge Luis Borges

Selected Poems 1923–67

Edited, with an introduction and notes, by Norman Thomas di Giovanni

Borges, the great Argentine writer, is known chiefly for his stories, but he himself says, 'First and foremost I think of myself as a reader, then as a poet, then as a prose writer.' This book is the first systematic presentation in English of his poems.

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towards the end of his tether
grandad
at the drop of a hat
would paint the railings

overnight
we became famous
allover the neighbourhood
for our smart railings

(and our dirty hats)

There is no language in the poem, no imagery, no rhythm; his moral joke stands ugly in a slum of words. Elsewhere, he can be sentimental ("Gift for a Lonely Girl"), and almost everything he writes is negative, dismissive, cursory, like comedy that has a dubious moral basis. There is no poetry in *After the Merrymaking*[6] in the sense of the penetration of a personality into words, or perception of truth becoming distinguished by its language.

Brian Patten has an imperfect sense of language through which his poems have to percolate without offending the reader—"Things go too quickly or else they dullen"; "re-occurring", which most users of the language avoid with "recurring"; "plow" for "plough". One notes with satisfaction that he has stopped trying to make English sound like German through the compounding which, like the other Liverpool poets, he practised with dedication in his previous two books.

Henri, McGough and Patten are not interested in language. They believe in gesture; they imply a principle of poetry that exists outside its embodiment in words: the medium is a handicap, an artifact of education and the literary past; soul is everything. There are more occasions in Patten's work, however, when his imagination produces language with quite startling qualities in spite of the mistakes which are their context.

There are many offensive patches in *The Irrelevant Song*,[7] but I'll confine adverse revelations to two specific kinds of tastelessness. First, he seems unable to tell when his imagination soars into the ridiculous; he simply writes it down regardless:

One morning he was visited by the Daughter of Sorrow.
Her name was Sympathy Unbuttoned.
Her eyes were green as meadows.
Small spiders nested in her curls.
Her breasts were non-existent.

Amazingly, all this happens in a poem that contains such good lines as

Across his tongue
The world's tastes skated . . .

Or the lines which end the title poem,

Where the night hugged its own shapes
And love hugged its habits.

Throughout the book, overcoming his second weakness, failures of surrealist, twittering narrative ("running fourteen nipples along the branch"), good lines keep a reader alive to Patten's originality.

Our pasts are hung in a dream of ruins . . . .

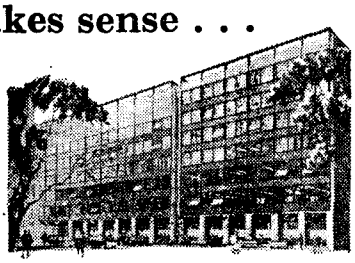
Like a necklace of deaths the flowers hug the ground . . . .

The longings that build their houses in tomorrow. . . .

If Patten could convince himself that thinking is not an irrelevance, that grammar is not the Rolls-Royce of the educated, and that poetry is made between the ears as much as under the left nipple, he could be outstanding. As an example of the sort of poet I believe he is, and should be more often, I advise readers interested in Patten to read the last two verses of "The Giant Seen".

[6] *After the Merrymaking*. By ROGER MCGOUGH. Jonathan Cape, £1·50, paper 60p.
[7] *The Irrelevant Song*. By BRIAN PATTEN. Allen & Unwin, £1·75.

It makes sense . . .



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Barry MacSweeney[8] is capable of warbling, gargling, shouting in most registers, and generally misbehaving with the alphabet. His poetry is under the spell of more Americans and Frenchmen than is decent for someone who comes from Newcastle. His considerable lyric talent is being wasted in a forlorn attempt to be intimate with notions of contemporaneity and at the front of all that's happened in recent poems. If we are more concerned with poems than with futile gestures, it can easily be shown that his wayward talent shines through in lines like

cheeks frail as moth dust,
pale as carp's eye,
dead-still on a red window ledge,
smoothing among lily pads.

In other poems, a reader may well be left wondering what lack in the poet makes it possible to mimic Pound's tricks of phrase and cadence so obviously. The admired personalities are certainly not Pound's, but the style is:

true parties are celebrations of hope
as Keir Hardie and Rudi Dutschke have it.

[8] *Our Mutual Scarlet Boulevard.* By BARRY MACSWEENEY, Fulcrum Press, £1·80.

As with Henri, McGough and Patten, MacSweeney's poems often imply a right to uphold themselves as the true voices of contemporary feeling. Their lives and attitudes appear so armoured that the only emergencies they detect are happening in other people's lives, the lives of those they dislike. McGough is particularly full of this: he makes fun of types, like "P.C. Plod". It is less urgent in Henri's poems, but it lies beneath much of what Patten has to say about love and sex. Barry MacSweeney practically acknowledges it. Curiously, they seldom if ever find anything disappointing about themselves in a poem. "If you are afraid of wolves, don't go into the forest." And these poets probably have a right to feel terrified.

WILLIAM PLOMER has never quite recaptured the ability which made possible such satisfying poems as "A Ticket for the Reading Room", or "Cannes, 1939". He may not have wanted to, which is understandable; there are circumstances other than intention which dictate changes in a poet's practice. Plomer's career is worthy of the attention of young men, as an example, not as a warning. He has been ruggedly individual, faithful to his inclinations, unconcerned with fashion, and his craftsmanship has always been scrupu-

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lous, his subjects interesting, his achievement considerable in spite of the fact that his "reputation" seems unshakably founded on his particular brand of ominously suggestive light verse.

Celebrations[9] is a positive book. "The Axe in the Orchard" describes the first London performance of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* in 1911; half the audience walked out by the end of the third act. The story is apt for Plomer's exposure of English complacency—his wit is sharp; however, admirers of his earlier poems are perhaps right to wish that he would again direct his satirical faculties to more contemporary objects. *In Celebrations,* he does this in four squib-quatrains, the best of which is "Positive":

His self-esteem has outrun calculation:
you'd make the biggest fortune ever known
if you could buy him at your valuation—
and sell him at his own.

Only Geoffrey Grigson is Plomer's equal at this kind of poem. They are both far from being young men; it would be a great pity if we were to lose this kind of writing. Targets abound.

[9] *Celebrations.* By WILLIAM PLOMER. Jonathan Cape, £1.

The Achievement of P. T. Bauer

Debunker of Economic Myths — By HARRY G. JOHNSON

THE FIELD OF development economics, at least as written about by the major stars of the economics profession concerned with it and as taught by their followers in most universities, has been until recently the scientifically weakest and most intellectually dishonest branch of economic studies, dominated by a socialist mythology of poverty applied to the less developed countries by Western intellectuals unable to make successful political propaganda out of the visible evils of capitalism in their own countries.

The reasons are fairly simple.

On the one hand, the apparent catastrophic failure of capitalism in the 1930s both converted many at least of the younger economists to the socialist cause, and attracted into economics many intellectuals already devoted to that cause. The success of capitalism in winning the Second World War and producing unprecedented prosperity and economic growth left these people emotionally unemployed. They easily found new employment by turning to the less developed countries and the problems of development as fodder for the expression of their criticisms of capitalism—at least until the war in Viet Nam (and the poverty, race, and environment problems of the United States) provided them with a more direct source of propaganda material.

On the other hand, the post-war generation of economists, professionalised and mathematised by the scientific progress of the subject achieved in the 1930s, and also warned off asking important social questions by the anxieties of the McCarthy period in the United States—the new home of scientific leadership and economic training—were quite content to apply their new techniques of input-output tables, linear programming, and cost-benefit analysis to the planning problems of the less developed countries without asking themselves what the development problem was all about and, specifically, whether the conceptions of the development problem preached by their professional elders and betters corresponded either with economic science or with the economic reality around them. (The two should be congruent, of course, but if they are not the outcome should be scientific progress.)

THE RESULT HAS BEEN that the West has failed to discharge its intellectual responsibilities to the less developed countries—in transitorily popular jargon, "the north" has failed "the south." In place of sound analysis and guidance to its former colonies and conquests, it has propagated a mixture of a minority Western ideology recommending the subjugation of the individual to the state under the slogan of "central planning for economic development", and a bag of statistical techniques for carrying out the exercise efficiently. The consequence (which has probably been good for the less developed countries from a long-run point of view but has certainly been painful in the interim) has been that their economists and intellectuals have had to rediscover for themselves—from hard experience of the irrelevance of the ideology and the inadequacy of the pure techniques—the basic truths that traditional economics has to offer about the nature and sources of economic development. (Similarly, the more intelligent and socially conscious of the younger generation of Western economic technicians, as they have matured, have begun to become interested again in political economy.)

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In all this, the lone exception to the general rule that 1930s economists have been propagating doctrinaire socialism in the developed countries under the guise of development economics has been P. T. Bauer.[1]

BAUER, like the others, is no high-powered technician in mathematics and statistics—and, unlike some of the others, he has lacked the charisma, academic prestige, and massive financial support necessary to induce more competent juniors to provide ceremonial adequacy for his ideas and empirical research. But he has consistently taken the elementary principles of economics seriously, rather than regard them as "obsolete capitalist ideology" to be ridiculed by exponents of a Marxo-Keynesian ideology. And he has been prepared both to put in the hard work required to acquire relevant facts and either interpret them in terms of theory or modify the theory in the light of the facts, and—more important, and demanding of intellectual courage—to stand by his results in the face of unprincipled assault by his ideologically-oriented colleagues on his academic competence and personal motivations.

Bauer's first major work, which won him the acclaim of his professional colleagues and a successful subsequent academic career, showed conclusively that British policy towards the rubber industry in Malaya protected the large European plantations against competition from the native small-holders. This was a message highly congenial to British socialists. But his next major work demonstrated that the West African cocoa marketing boards, in contrast to their ostensible purpose of improving the level and security of income of the African peasant producers, were in fact a means of imposing on them a degree of regressive taxation that would not be tolerated in any Western democracy. This was a message most uncongenial to the socialist intellectual establishment, and earned Bauer the unreasoning and unbridled enmity of his senior Cambridge colleagues and their Oxford friends, as well as getting him (and his innocent students) virtually blacklisted by the African colonial administrators and the Food & Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. In both cases, it is quite clear in the light of historical hindsight that British policy was imposing on the colonies methods of market organisation based on obsolete ideas. These ideas were inherited from the extremely superficial

[1] Exception should also be made, however, for the Canadian economist Benjamin Higgins, whose early writings in the field displayed a comparable understanding of the role of prices in the functioning of the economy.

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governmental understanding of Britain's own problems during the stagnant period of overvaluation and industrial uncompetitiveness of the late 1920s and early 1930s, when "rationalisation of industry" was the catch-phrase. In welcoming Bauer's work on Malaya and then closing ranks against his work on West Africa—both works being of one consistent intellectual piece—his academic colleagues were jettisoning their professional integrity and denying their scientific obligations to pursue truth, for the sake of making ideological propaganda.

Subsequently, Bauer's professional integrity and concern for economic truth as traditionally understood have put him (or led him to put himself) in fundamental critical opposition to all the successive stars of development economics—Ragnar Nurkse, Arthur Lewis, Benjamin Higgins, Gunnar Myrdal, and (though his name must be mentioned in the same sentence only because of his political importance in the United Kingdom) Thomas Balogh.

This consistently critical posture—along with the rather unfortunate publication of a savage and dogmatic critique of Indian economic planning financed by an American free-enterprise institute in the early days when Indians were sublimely confident in their planning and deeply resentful of Western criticism—has made Bauer an outcast in his field. He became the victim of the kind of personal slander that British academics use as a substitute for reasoned debate, especially when their students begin to ask awkward questions about propositions derived from ideology rather than analysis and facts. The consequence has been that, while many younger economists (especially in the less developed countries) have come around to the same sort of views on development as Bauer has maintained for over a quarter-of-a-century, his writings remain suspect. He has still not received the credit that is his intellectual and scientific due. A typical comment on Bauer is (and I have heard it): "I agree with much of what he has written but I can't afford to admit that I've taken the trouble to read it."

THE EXPERIENCE must have been a bitter one for Bauer. The bitterness shows to some extent in the book under review,[2] which is a summary of and monument to his life-time work on development problems. It shows particularly (and rather tediously) in the relentless pursuit of criticism of other writers down to the minutest detail of ambiguity or superficial analysis. But on the whole, Bauer has reacted positively and constructively to the fact of his professional and political unpopularity, and the book is surprisingly mellow and reasonable to anyone familiar with the ebullient iconoclasm of his earlier writings.

BAUER'S POSITIVE REACTION to the hostility that has surrounded him has taken two lines. On the one hand, he has been driven into profound meditation on the logic of scientific method, which has led him to a "positive" position derived from Karl Popper (and, among economists, Milton Friedman), stressing the testing of propositions both by logic and against empirical facts. This position is in diametric opposition to the soggy pseudo-scientific methodology propagated by Gunnar Myrdal, according to which so long as you declare your value-judgments at the beginning you can come out with any policy prescription you like at the end. This is a methodology which has sanctioned so many Oxbridge economists in the politicisation of the subject, the confusion of problem analysis with policy prescription, and the conduct of scientific debate by character assassination. Bauer's position is the only possible basis for a science of society. Simply put, it is that truth is truth, however suspect the motives a man may have for enquiring into it, and lies are lies, however noble the motives a man may have for telling them.

On the other hand, Bauer has become interested, perhaps even fascinated, by what might be termed the sociology of economic beliefs. What are the reasons why men cling to and insist on systems of economic thought and policy prescription that are either internally inconsistent or vacuous, or at obvious variance with the observed facts of experience (or both)? Part of the explanation is so obvious as to be almost intellectually trivial (though nonetheless of great practical importance). Systems of economic beliefs imply political and economic power of a monopolistic kind for certain groups in society; these groups, therefore, have a self-interest in propagating those beliefs and shielding them from exposure to reality. But Bauer is not content with this explanation. It is essentially a simple inversion of the Marxist view of the relation between the economic system and ideology. So he has been led at various points to speculate on the fundamental problems of man in the modern world of irresistible social and economic change and on the role of economic beliefs, however unscientifically founded, in preserving a semblance of sensed order in the social system and providing comfort for men bewildered and disorganised

[2] *Dissent on Development: Studies and Debates in Development Economics*. By P. T. BAUER. Weidenfeld & Nicholson, £4.

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by the processes of change that engulf them.

Most of this book consists of previously published essays, though these have been extensively rewritten and sometimes considerably expanded to give consistency and fuller explanation and to eliminate overlaps to the extent possible without destruction of expository structure. The principal exception (Chapter 5, "Asian Vistas") is a hitherto-unpublished full-scale critique of Myrdal's *Asian Drama*. (Bauer may well be the only person ever to have read that fantastically expensive indulgence of one man's intellectual vanity carefully, and twice, from cover to cover.) In this essay Bauer documents in devastating detail what many more casual readers have sensed to be deeply offensive about that book—Myrdal's innate contempt for human beings as such, and particularly for the rich variety of Asian humanity, and his desire to convert Asia into a sort of super-Sweden in which a homogeneous faceless and characterless mass of the citizenry would slave away under the compulsion of the state to produce an ever-mounting flow of material goods and services, the production and equalitarian distribution of which is assumed to constitute the sole measure of human happiness. Bauer points out, quite rightly—and entirely in line with the recent writings of the new Left wing—that people may prefer Buddhism over Bendixes, Hinduism over Hovercraft, Moslemism over motor cars, poverty over pollution, and the inner vision over television.

BUT WHILE BAUER PINPOINTS and underscores Myrdal's utopian-socialist contempt for the lives and aspirations of ordinary Asians, he misses the opportunity, in my judgment, to call attention to and expose the fundamental fallacy in Myrdal's approach to social theory and analysis. It is a fallacy which runs through his work from *An American Dilemma* and his earlier books on development to *Asian Drama*. The fallacy is a simple one. If, confronted with a world of growth and change, I impose on it the assumption of 1930s economics and sociology that the system is a static general equilibrium system, I will inevitably discover in that system a disequilibrium which the system as I have conceived it cannot itself solve. And I will be driven by the logic of my construction to appeal to some exogenous revolutionary force to resolve the dilemma—either a change in the mind of the white man, or a political revolution. But I have created the dilemma for myself by applying a tidy static model to an untidy dynamic reality.

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It does not necessarily exist now, or if it does the passage of time is likely to dissipate it. It is only fair to Bauer, however, to add that he has consistently warned against the assumption that poverty in the less developed countries represents an economic equilibrium and not merely a late start on the road to modernisation.

The essays in the book are grouped into three Parts. Part Two, "Case Studies", mostly summarises Bauer's earlier work on West Africa; Part Three, "Review Articles", provides the student with a detailed critique of all the important books in the field. Part One, on "Ideology and Experience", is the longest by far (nearly 350 pages); and it is likely to be the most interesting to the non-specialist reader seeking enlightenment about the meaning, if any, of the catch-phrases that abound in popular speeches and writings about economic development. Such a reader is advised, however, to read the Introduction first and then to sample the essays according to his taste and interest—for he will find Bauer typically attempting to teach him more than he probably wants to know.

Under the heading of "Ideology and Experience", Bauer tackles one after the other the rhetorical phrases and slogans of the development- and aid-promoters, and shows them to be vacuous, propagandistic, illogical, founded weakly if at all on empirical and historical evidence, and sometimes all four together. His targets include the alleged "vicious circle of poverty" in less developed countries; the alleged "widening gap" between the rich and the poor countries; "comprehensive central planning" as a solution to the development problem; the arguments for foreign aid; the contention that "colonialism" is a prime cause of lack of development and poverty, and the corollary contention that Marxism-Leninism offers the key to the solution; Myrdal's *Asian Drama*, already referred to; and the philosophy of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the intellectual creation of Raùl Prebisch. The game is almost too easy. Not just one, but a whole succession, of emperors have no clothes on; and it is only natural for the little boy to jump up and down with delight as he points this out to his solemn seniors. Bauer's method is deceptively simple and very effective. For example, if colonialism is the cause of economic backwardness, how do you explain the fact that those developing countries in closest contact with the advanced countries are relatively the most developed?

While the argument marshals a wide variety of questions and evidence of this kind, there is a consistent and highly scholarly emphasis on the relevance of economic history to the debate. A

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corollary theme, which distresses Bauer more than it probably will distress readers more used to the devices of political debate, is the debasement of the language for propaganda purposes, and the difficulty of maintaining "a worthwhile level of discussion."

BAUER HAS CAST his book in the form of a dissent from the prevailing orthodoxy of development economics—more accurately, the prevailing propaganda that parades itself as economics—and he specifically refuses to present any general theory of development on the grounds that

> economic development is a major aspect of the historical progress of entire societies, and is therefore not susceptible to general theory, in the sense in which phenomena studied by the natural and (to a lesser extent) the social sciences are. Moreover, economic development depends largely on determinants which cannot readily be analysed with the tools of economic theory.

Nevertheless, there is in the background of his thinking a broadly social theory of development based on history and on the insights of the classical and neo-classical economists. This is summarised in the following passage:

> I shall repeatedly refer to certain categories of personal and group characteristics which I consider to be the principal determinants of material progress, notably abilities, qualities, capacities, and faculties; attitudes, mores, values, objectives, and motivations; and institutions and political arrangements. The terms used in the first of these categories have a strong personal element and refer to traits which may be to a considerable extent hereditary; in the second group there is a larger cultural and social element; in the third category the cultural, social and political influences are plainly predominant.

One noteworthy implication of this orientation is that Bauer has consistently appreciated the contributions of religious and ethnic minorities to economic development in various parts of Asia and Africa. He recognises the adverse economic effects of discrimination against and expulsion or slaughter of such groups, whereas most other development experts have either turned a blind eye to these phenomena or even tacitly approved the purging of minorities as a step towards the creation of a more homogeneous nation-state (while, of course, expressing the most fulsome "progressive" sympathy with the individual victims of persecution). Another more important implication is that Bauer is by no means a blind devotee of *laissez-faire*. No sensible man is, which is why socialist dogmatists like to accuse those who disagree with their dogmatic prescriptions of being equally fatuous dogmatists. He is, rather, soberly persuaded that government policies designed to promote development along the lines he believes are possible would tax the intellectual and administrative capacities of most poor countries beyond the limits of their available resources.

THIS IS, NATURALLY, NOT the kind of stuff to appeal either to Western economists and other intellectuals appalled by and feeling moral guilt about the poverty they observe in the less developed countries and anxious to eradicate it, or to less-developed-country politicians elected on promises to elevate their nations to economic equality with their ex-colonial masters or with the United States. But it ought to be read carefully by those of both the nominal Right and the nominal Left who profess to base their desire to promote development on a concern for the humanity and dignity of man. Bauer believes that people generally want to improve themselves, and will try to do so if provided with the opportunity. But both the strength of this urge and their capacity to fulfil it vary for all sorts of reasons. Indeed "improvement" may well mean achieving more leisure for the pursuit of religious or other forms of self-fulfilment rather than spending more time earning more money in order to buy consumer durables that save time that can be devoted to earning more money, etc. The rat-race in short, should be open to all self-declared rats but not made compulsory for all human beings. The rats will race and the best racer should be allowed to win the prize; but one should not be either surprised or resentful if normally a real rat and not, say, a cultured human being carries off the trophy.

A major problem in the development literature is the unquestioned assumption that a civilised human being should be able to beat a rat without trying, any day of the week, and if he can't, there should be a handicap on the rat. Bauer tells us that not every civilian, worker or merchant or farmer, is that much of a rat; but that those who are should be allowed to race to their hearts' content, and let the best rat (or pseudo-rat) win. Those who are not should be tolerantly allowed to opt out.

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EAST & WEST

Arabic Political Memoirs

By Elie Kedourie

SEX AND POWER are perhaps the two most potent urges which can seize men and possess them. But the received wisdom of mankind has recognised that ecstatic and ineffable as are the pleasures they can procure, yet they must be approached with fear and circumspection, since they can also unleash chthonic forces and lead to terror and madness. Both Athens and Jerusalem taught this in their different ways, and their legacy was taken up and appropriated by both Muslims and Christians.

But in modern times large numbers of Westerners have come to disbelieve in the horrors of love or politics, to forget that Venus can be a bird of prey *toute entière à sa proie attachée*, or that, for all our philosophy, the night can still "sweat with terror", and we like weasels still be "fighting in a hole." Happiness through sexual satisfaction or through political action has been a dominant idea in Europe and America since Sade and St Just, and it has naturally issued in the nihilism which is so widespread among Western intellectual classes today. The prestige of the West has ensured the conversion of non-European intellectuals to these beliefs, which the techniques invented by Europe have helped to spread among them. They, too, have come to entertain delusive and exaggerated expectations above love and politics; and among them, too, nihilism is, in consequence, rampant.

Anyone surveying Arabic literary and political writing over the last few decades will find in it ample confirmation for these remarks. Young men growing up in the Arab Middle East between the two World Wars fervently believed that if only they could liberate themselves from the power of tradition, and control by foreigners, they would create for themselves *des lendemains qui chantent*, in which public happiness would be the crown and guarantee of private bliss.[1]

In the quarter of a century since the end of the Second World War, they at last took their destiny in their own hands, and tasted to the full the disappointments and the disasters of the life of politics. Autonomous political action coincided with—and led to—the disaster in Palestine, a disaster the like of which had never befallen the Arab world when it was governed by the Ottomans. To this defeat at the hand of a hitherto-despised group has been added the bitter spectacle of soldiers laying rough hands on the body politic, plotting with and occasionally murdering one another, ranting about liberation, revolution, and the other slogans which in an evil hour Europe had let loose over the East, and all the while steadily extending their dead hand over a society which may have been in the past ruled by aliens, but which for all its poverty and "backwardness" still had some precious graces, still allowed the individual some elbow-room, and mercifully permitted a retreat into privacy.

The life of politics has thus brought to Arabs humiliation abroad and impotence at home; and the disappointment is proportionate to the great rewards which, deceived by the European mirage, they had come to expect from political autonomy. The Western "Arabophiles" who proliferate in universities, public life, and the "communications industry"—the kind of friends from whom one must pray to be protected—have managed to give currency to a picture of the Arab as a humourless, solemn, sententious, tediously strident creature. To penetrate beyond this caricature is to discover that the Arabs are "men like us all," who weigh in the same balance as ourselves justice and oppression, tyranny and freedom, loyalty and faithfulness, honour and dishonour.

THERE IS NO BETTER WAY of realising this than to read some of the political memoirs which have been coming out in large numbers in the last decade or so. They provide a valuable clue to the character of recent Arab politics, and paint a melancholy picture of the disappointments and disasters which its practitioners have had to suffer. Apart from some fiction from the pen of one or two gifted authors, like the Egyptian

[1] As these lines are being written there reaches me a small book by a well-known Syrian poet, Nizar Qabbani, entitled *On Poetry, Sex and Revolution* (Beirut, 1972).

In this book Qabbani argues that sex is the "fundamental problem" of Arab society and that once this problem is solved all other problems will likewise.

> "Sex [he writes] is our eternal headache, the incubus which devours us day and night. If you ask me about the size of the sexual problem, I will tell you that it has exactly the same size as our cranium, so that there is not a single convolution in the Arab brain which is not tumescent with sex."

Qabbani believes in revolution which is "a total change in the geography of Arab man", and in this change sexual and political emancipation go hand in hand.

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Najib Mahfuz, these memoirs constitute perhaps the most lively and the most interesting portion of Arabic literary production today.

By far the largest part of this literature, it is significant to observe, is published in Beirut where it is still possible for writers to escape censorship and suppression. It is mostly written by refugees, or émigrés, or by those who have lost out in whatever ghastly game they have chosen to play. That they apologise, or palliate or embellish or suppress, in no way diminishes the value of what they write. For unwittingly or not, this literature testifies alike to the endemic distemper which afflicts most Middle Eastern polities, and to the fact that so much disorder and misfortune has not yet entirely deadened the critical faculty, or banished all liveliness and independence of mind.

Of Conspiracy & Murder

IT IS appropriate to begin this account of some of the most noteworthy of these political memoirs with a short and modest work by an Iraqi professional soldier who, as a member of the Royal Guard, witnessed the murder of the King of Iraq and his family in 1958.

In *The Secrets of the Assassination of the Royal Family in Iraq, 14 July 1958* (Beirut, 1971) Lieutenant Falih Hanzal in a modest and unassuming way, with the precision and economy of a military despatch, sets the scene of the crime, shows how the *coup d'état* started and quickly snowballed, and in what manner the royal household were, suddenly, in a terrible exhibition of blood-lust, indiscriminately mowed down with machine-guns by a handful of junior officers. But it is not only the physical scene which Hanzal sets. During the two years that he served in the Royal Guard, he had many opportunities to observe the royal family at close quarters, and particularly the young King, Faysal, and his uncle and heir-apparent, Abd al-Ilah. Faysal himself, as Hanzal reports, was a cypher, content to leave all important matters in the hands of his uncle who, in effect, exercised ultimate power and authority in the state. To him the politicians, the secret police, and military intelligence reported, and from him they took their instructions. According to Hanzal, in the two years that he knew Abd al-Ilah, the latter was oppressed with a heavy sense of fatality, and seemed utterly weary of the burden of power which he had borne since 1939 when his brother-in-law, Ghazi, died in an accident, and he was made regent for the infant King. He was kept accurately informed of the plots against his régime which were constantly being hatched in the army. But this information seemed only to induce in Abd al-Ilah a feeling of resignation. He seemed resigned to the fact that, aliens as they were, with no roots in the country, it was vain for him and his family to struggle against the dislike and the hatred of the Iraqis. In the last few months of his life he was repeatedly given details of army plots, and his reaction was that the officers who were implicated were patriotic and devoted to the country, which they might serve better than he; if they did not want him, then he was ready to leave the country together with his nephew. Hanzal describes an interview toward the end of April 1958 in which he reported information that had come to his knowledge:

> . . . he did not comment in any way on the news, or ask for further details. He nodded and thanked me, his face showing his desire to be left alone, and that I should not add to the oppression of his spirits. For he was no longer in need of news, or information, or even friends. I may almost say here that he was no longer in need of Iraq either.

It is this failure of nerve, this intimate conviction that the régime he headed was alien and illegitimate which proved fatal to Abd al-Ilah and his family. Hanzal describes how a handful of soldiers arrived opposite the main gate of the modest villa which served as the royal residence in the early morning of 14 July 1958 and started firing desultorily at the building. In and around the villa Abd al-Ilah had at his orders a large body of disciplined and loyal troops who could have easily overcome the attackers. But Abd al-Ilah ordered them to refrain from firing at the assailants. Within half-an-hour the original attackers were joined by mutinous cadets from an infantry school in an army camp nearby. They were armed with bazookas and anti-tank guns and quickly set fire to the house, compelling the royal family to take refuge in the basement. The house was not yet entirely surrounded, and it would still have been possible to escape through the back garden. His entourage implored Abd al-Ilah to do so; but he refused adamantly either to do this, or to order a counter-attack. He would negotiate with the rebels, Faysal would sign his abdication and they would all leave Iraq. Hanzal was convinced that the regent was seized with a fatalism which made him utterly sceptical of any attempt to resist the mutineers. This fatalism was "a deadly mistake"; it was inspired by the example of his father Ali, who had preferred to surrender together with four thousand soldiers to a handful of Saudi soldiers, thus giving up the throne of the Hejaz in 1924 in order to escape with his life. An emissary was sent outside with a white flag and he brought back with him rebel officers for negotiation. At the point of the gun they ordered the royal family to leave the basement by a side-door

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for the garden. When they had all filed out, another officer (Abd al-Sattar Sabi' al-'Ubusi) who was then standing on the steps leading to the main door, observing the cortège coming out, suddenly and impulsively fired a burst from his machine-gun at the backs of the prisoners. Hanzal declares that he had an opportunity afterwards to discuss the killings with 'Ubusi, who told him that when he fired he was in "a state of madness," as though a black cloud had obscured his vision, that he fired his machine-gun without knowing what he was doing or taking in what was going on in front of him. A year after the *coup d'état,* Hanzal adds, 'Ubusi retired from public life. In 1969 he committed suicide for reasons still unknown.

'Ubusi's burst of machine-gun fire plunged the other officers in the garden into a murderous frenzy. They also began firing their weapons at the inmates of the royal villa, and in a few minutes slaughtered the King, his uncle, and the latter's mother and sister, together with the servants who had been compelled to join the procession of their masters.

> The sight of blood, together with the sound of shooting [Hanzal writes] maddened the officer in the armoured car and he opened fire with his heavy machine-gun on the bodies which were lying on the ground, riddling them with bullets. The orphan boy Ja'far who was being brought up by the princess Abdiyya [the regent's sister] tried to take refuge in some corner of the palace, but the soldiers soon pursued him with their rifle fire and finished him.

Only the regent's wife escaped alive from this massacre; she had been left for dead, but an officer later realised that she was still alive and managed to get her into a hospital.

Shortly after the massacre, the bodies were piled in a van to be taken to the morgue. By that time a dense crowd had assembled near the villa and was impeding the passage of the van. It appears that the pressure of the crowd threw the officers who were in the van into a panic; and they decided to abandon Abd al-Ilah's body to the mob. They tipped it out of the van and made their escape. Ropes were quickly brought, and the regent's body was attached by the neck and the armpits to the back of a lorry which proceeded to drag it through the streets, the increasingly numerous mob escorting it with shouts of *Allahu akbar*. During all this, men armed with knives and choppers began to get to work on it. The regent's sex was first cut off, and then his arms and legs; they were thrown to groups of young men who ran off waving these members with joyful shouts. By the time the procession reached the ministry of defence on the other side of the river, the body was no more than a bruised and mutilated trunk. Opposite the ministry men with ropes appeared on a first-floor balcony. By means of these ropes the body was hoisted from the street and secured to the balcony:

> a young man with a knife in his hand climbed a lamp-post nearby, and stabbed the corpse repeatedly in the back. He then began cutting off the flesh, working from the buttocks upwards. From the street a long white stick was brought which was inserted into the corpse and forcibly pushed inside.

What was left of the regent's body that evening was soaked with petrol and set on fire, the burnt remains being thrown into the Tigris.

Hanzal concludes his precise and unassuming account by recording the symmetrical fate which befell the body of Abd al-Karim Qasim who had overthrown the monarchy. He, in turn, was overthrown by another *coup d'état* on 9 February 1963, carried out by some of his original fellow-conspirators, and immediately executed. He was secretly buried in a shallow grave outside Baghdad. Some dogs came upon the corpse and started to eat it, to the horror of some *fellahs* nearby. These provided a coffin and gave the body a decent burial. When the secret police came to hear of this, they disinterred the body and threw it into the Tigris.

HANZAL'S ACCOUNT is that of a close, well-informed observer who narrates with quiet fatalism what his eyes saw and his ears heard. The same matter-of-fact quality may be found in the memoirs of another officer. But since, unlike Hanzal, the latter adopts this tone to describe what he did and not what he saw, the impression of horror carried away by the reader is scarcely less powerful than that emanating from Hanzal's book, even though there is nothing here like the demoniacal orgy of 14 July 1958 which Hanzal describes with such powerful restraint.

Fadlallah abu Mansur is a Druze from Salkhad in Syria who in 1928 joined the *troupes spéciales* raised by the French in the Levant states which they administered under a League of Nations mandate. By 1945 he had been promoted to lieutenant, and when Syria became independent he naturally joined the new Syrian army. He took part in the Palestine war in 1948, and between 1949 and 1954 was involved in the successive *coups d'état* which took place in Syria during this period. It is to these events that his memoirs, *Damascus Hurricanes*, published about 1959, are mostly devoted.

The first of these *coups d'état* took place in March 1949 when a senior officer, Husni al-Za'im, taking as his pretext the maladministration and corruption which he claimed had led to defeat in Palestine, toppled the civilian régime, and himself exercised all the powers of the state. Very soon other officers, who had started by supporting

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Za'im's *coup d'état*, began conspiring against him, and abu Mansur took a prominent part in the conspiracy. One night in August 1949, Fadlallah abu Mansur drove with a small troop to Za'im's residence in Damascus, surrounded it, overpowered the sentries and, hammering on the door of Za'im's palace, called on him to surrender. When Za'im did not immediately give himself up, abu Mansur machine-gunned the door, broke it open, and strode into the palace. Za'im then came down, buttoning a pair of trousers over his pyjamas. He was taken into an armoured car and driven to the outskirts of Damascus. The whole operation took no more than fifteen minutes. Abu Mansur then waited with his prisoner for instructions. Za'im was in a state of shock and did not at first recognise his captor, for, says abu Mansur, "I was in field dress, and had let my black thick beard grow, so that I looked hirsute and frightful. . . ." Za'im first tried to bribe his captor into letting him escape, and offered a large sum of money:

> I answered "How did you acquire such a fortune? Did you not say that you would leave power as poor as when you came to it? How has your poverty become wealth?" He began to mutter: "By God, I am innocent, I am innocent. This is a plot by the British to destroy the independence of the country." I said to him: "Do not be afraid for independence. We are jealous for it and will know how to preserve it."

Some two hours or so later, a detachment of troops came with another prisoner, the civilian Muhsin al-Barazi who was Za'im's prime minister. He was brought to abu Mansur, still in his pyjamas, trembling with fear and shouting: "Take pity on me. I have nothing to do with what happened. Take pity on me. Take pity on my children. I throw myself on your mercy." With the new prisoner came instructions from the leaders of the *coup d'état* that Za'im and Barazi had been condemned to death and were to be immediately executed. Abu Mansur therefore took hold of Barazi with his left hand, and of Za'im with his right and led them to a depression by the road where a squad of soldiers duly executed them. While awaiting his fate Za'im, who had not had time to dress properly, felt cold and begged for abu Mansur's overcoat. The latter gave it to him, and Za'im died wearing it. But abu Mansur resumed possession of it, and he reproduces in his memoirs a certificate from the leader of the new *coup d'état*, attesting the fact and declaring that the holes and the traces of blood appearing on the overcoat were caused by the execution, "to certify which he was given this document."

Hinnawi thus succeeded Za'im. But shortly after he took power, some of his fellow-conspirators began to be discontented, and to conspire in turn against him. The leader of the new conspiracy was Shishakli with whom abu Mansur was on close terms of friendship, rendered even closer by the fact that they both sympathised with the ideology of the movement known as the *Parti populaire syrien*, which in the early 1950s was the great rival of Ba'thist ideology among young army officers. Hinnawi suspected something, and tried to discover where abu Mansur's sympathies lay. In order to detach him from Shishakli, he dangled before abu Mansur the prospect of rapid promotion. In reply, abu Mansur held to the same elevated language as he had when Za'im had tried to bribe him:

> "I swear to you, General [he said] that I do not seek anything of what you have promised me. The only honour I seek is to serve my country faithfully and loyally, and to be a man of principles and action. I therefore solemnly promise to do all that in my power lies to serve the interests of my country. Please therefore have no anxiety in this respect."

A politician encouraging him to save the country from Hinnawi heard exactly the same exalted sentiments:

> "Be at ease, Akram bey, we act only at the behest of our conscience and our patriotism. We take no action except to serve our country and preserve its sovereignty and independence. We offer our blood to this end, and no power in the world can turn us away from our duty. We here are ready to protect Syria, whatever the price."

Duty called one morning in December 1949. At dawn that day, abu Mansur moved into Damascus with a small force. In half-an-hour he had arrested Hinnawi and his key men, and occupied the police headquarters and the police station. Shishakli came to power.

> Our purpose in the third *coup d'état* [writes abu Mansur] was to save the country from disorder and anarchy, and entrust government to loyal and faithful men known for their patriotic devotion, and their truthful and upright character. This would enable the army to withdraw from politics and things to return to their normal course. These aspirations were disappointed, and Shishakli concentrated all power in his hands.

Abu Mansur was horrified by such cavalier treatment of responsibilities and prerogatives . . . by this open attack on the pillars of the State and its fundamentals. But even though Shishakli was abusing his power in this way, and though he persecuted abu Mansur and in the end retired him from the army, yet the latter refused to conspire against him. Two officers approached him with an offer of two hundred thousand liras if he would go to Damascus and form a gang to murder Shishakli. He turned down the offer because his party—the *Parti populaire syrien*—was opposed to murder, and "I personally

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disapprove of murder and consider it a species of villainy." However, though he was retired, he took some part in the army movement which toppled Shishakli in February 1954.

In spite of his services, he was not reinstated. Ba'thist officers were now in charge of army appointments, and they were wary of his politics. Further, as one of them said: "abu Mansur would make a *coup d'état* even in his grave." When one of these Ba'thist officers was murdered by a member of the *Parti populaire syrien*, abu Mansur had to flee from Syria and take refuge in the Lebanon. The book ends with a dithyramb addressed to Mount Hermon which the author had to cross on his flight:

> O Hermon! Brother of time! Pole of history! Twin of the gods! . . . O summit in my country, proclaim that my nation is a summit among nations! O Hermon! I testify that your meaning and significance is in our breasts, in our faith, in our blood; that we hold it aloft as a torch to illumine and guide until right shall awake and falsehood die!

Between Honour & Rhetoric

THE RHETORIC OF SENSIBILITY, patriotism, and the public interest sits ill with conspiracies against the lawful government and executions at dawn. It is this contrast which gives abu Mansur's memoirs so repulsive a quality, and produces in the reader so vivid a sense of the degradation of politics in large parts of the Arabic-speaking world today. But the gap between what is said and what is actually done is not always so hopelessly wide. The *Memoirs* of Haza' al-Majali (Amman, 1960) show us a public man whose discourse patently attempts confrontation with a political situation which, however dangerous and disturbed, yet does not inspire the same terror as the blood-intoxicated Baghdadi mob, or the treacherous and relentless conspirators of Syria.

It is not that Haza' al-Majali remained immune from terror. On the contrary, born about 1918 into a notable family at Kerak in Trans-Jordan, he was to die in August 1960, a few months after the publication of these memoirs, victim of a bomb placed in his office in Amman. This was said to be the work of agents of the United Arab Republic, whose president considered Majali and King Hussein an obstacle to his vaulting ambition.

Majali went to school in Kerak and Salt, and he gives an engaging and illuminating account of the relentless politicisation to which schoolboys were subjected, even in that out-of-the-way part of the Arab world, as early as the 1920s and '30s:

> I remember that I was in the fifth form of the primary school when Sulayman al-Nabulsi [one of his teachers and later a Jordanian prime minister] came into the class-room on the morning of 2 November. As soon as he came in, he asked us in English what day it was. Some said it was Sunday, others that it was the second of November. But he shouted at us with excessive emotion: "Today is the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration". He went on shouting in English, *"Down with the Balfour Declaration!"* We had never heard of Balfour or the Balfour Declaration. He began to explain to us the Declaration, its circumstances, its meaning, and the necessity of protesting and demonstrating against it. We went out of the class-room and got all the other schoolboys out, and marched in a noisy demonstration, which may have been the first one to take place in Kerak. Those who understood the aims and watchwords of this demonstration were very few, for the large crowd were shouting slogans. Some were shouting, *"Down with Krikor!"*, Krikor being an Armenian shoemaker who had joined the demonstration and was shouting at the top of his voice, *"Balfour! O group of Balfour!"* Some were shouting, *"Down with the balcony!"*, others *"Down with one who is upstairs!"*

Of his years at the secondary school in Salt, Majali says that there he and his fellow-pupils perfected the art of demonstrating with or without a pretext.

At the end of the Second World War Majali was a law student in Damascus. In May 1945, the Syrian government clashed with the French mandatory, and there were noisy anti-French student demonstrations. The students asked to share in the struggle for liberation and the Syrian government allowed them to volunteer for the Syrian army:

> We went to the barracks and, after a formal medical examination, put on uniforms. What drew my attention was that most of those who had made speeches that day asking to be allowed to bear arms obtained medical certificates prescribing a rest at home in order to recover from the exertions of the *jihad!*

By the third day the number of volunteers, which had begun by approaching the thousand mark, dwindled to a hundred or less. Majali was to observe similar happenings in Amman at the beginning of the Palestine War three years later. "Volunteering", he observes,

> was in most cases mere showing off, a means of boasting and self-glorification or even, regrettably, of making a living. I myself have seen with my own eyes this phenomenon in Amman and elsewhere. The volunteers paraded the streets amidst the applause of the crowd and their shouts, and the traditional trilling of the women. They would fire off their guns with such frequency that when they reached their battle station in Palestine their ammunition was all but exhausted. It is not out of place to mention here, with much regret, that many of these volunteers were a heavy burden on the Arab villagers and town-dwellers, and that volunteering was sometimes a means to robbery and plunder!

The Palestine War, which was to have a profound and nefarious influence on Majali's

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life and career, can be said to have been finally made inevitable by the ambitions and policies of the ruler of Trans-Jordan, King Abdullah.[2] His régime was, however, somewhat different from those of Iraq and Syria, of which Hanzal's book and abu Mansur's memoirs are such a lurid reflection. Majali, on his return from Syria, was soon much in demand as a lawyer and was eventually tempted to play a part in politics. He joined a small group who opposed the King's reliance on a number of elderly ministers of non-Jordanian origin. But Abdullah took up and befriended the able young lawyer who soon became a prominent member of his entourage. Majali's memoirs provide an affectionate and well-observed picture of Abdullah's personality, and his very idiosyncratic way of conducting public business:

> He had a special way of greeting known to the Jordanians, which enabled one to gauge the extent of royal favour. It was his custom to allow his hand to be kissed. Sometimes it would be extended wide open which would be a sign of approval, and sometimes it would be clenched to indicate displeasure. Occasionally he would put his hand on someone's chin as a particular sign of approval. Sometimes he would extend his hand to be kissed on both sides, and would then allow his cheek to be kissed, as a sign of complete approval. These various manifestations were often the subject of comment and the basis of various rumours about ministerial changes or appointments to high office or to important positions.

Abdullah's favour opened to Majali the career of a high official, of a minister, and eventually of prime minister. Jordanian politics were—and still are—very much dominated by the King, who rules the country through a small number of notables and courtiers whom he tries to balance against one another. On to this essentially simple arrangement, elections and a parliament have been grafted. In what sense, if any, members of this parliament represented those who elected them was very obscure, and what went on in parliament had usually little relation to the realities of power. It was rather an elaborate game of shadow-boxing which, however, sometimes proved lucrative to the participants. Majali describes how, when he was an opposition leader, he put down a motion of No Confidence in the government, which compelled it to mobilise its supporters. For their services in the voting lobby these exacted financial and other rewards—

> and how often [adds Majali] some of these members described to me the way in which the government responded to their demands and served their interests. They went so far as to wish me to put down continuously motions of No Confidence so that gifts and grants might be repeated.

MAJALI BECAME PRIME MINISTER at a crucial moment in Jordanian history. The British and their Middle-Eastern allies were pressing Jordan to join the Baghdad Pact, while Egypt and Saudi Arabia opposed this strongly. In order to prevent such an outcome, they organised demonstrations, particularly among the discontented and volatile Palestinians whom Abdullah had, to his own undoing, incorporated into his kingdom. It fell then to Majali to deal with the serious agitation and rioting which the opponents of the Pact were fomenting. Majali was invested with office on 15 December 1955. But he clearly did not have the stomach to invoke that *ultima ratio* which, as King Hussein showed in the summer of 1970, the rulers of a state like Jordan must not hesitate to invoke, or else face ruin and destruction. Four days later, on 19 December, he resigned.

> I remember [Majali writes] the morning of the day on which I presented my resignation. . . . The demonstration in Amman had become more tumultuous, and when they [a delegation of West Bank politicians] were with me, I heard the sound of shots. I communicated with police headquarters, asking the reason for these shots, and strongly reiterating the instructions not to open fire on anybody. Shortly afterwards, General Radi Innab, the assistant chief of staff, spoke to me and asked me to allow army and police sharp-shooters to pick out and shoot the leaders of the demonstration and nobody else. I vehemently refused, and said to him that I preferred to resign rather than have anybody fired on or harmed. . . .
>
> I could have imposed the [Baghdad] pact by force . . . but I preferred to resign and stay at home, rather than adopt a policy of violence, I who had always disapproved of and combated it.

There is incongruity here between the reality and what is said and done in order to cope with it. Parliament, Constitution, Party, etc.—such a vocabulary has little meaning in a polity such as Jordan, and Majali's use of it, which seems not entirely rhetorical, increases the pathos with which his violent death has invested these memoirs.

Of Eloquence & Nostalgia

DURING AND BEFORE THE OUTBREAK of the Palestine War in May 1948, Majali was in King Abdullah's entourage and thus was able to observe events across the Jordan from a privileged vantage-point. He states that the course of the struggle between Jews and Arabs in the period before the British evacuation led them to feel anxious and fearful over the eventual outcome. The catastrophe, he observes, would have been easier to bear and narrower in its scope if the Arabs of Palestine had realised the true

[2] See Elie Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970), pp. 230–1, where the evidence in support of such a judgment, including a significant episode described in Majali's memoirs, is examined.

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position. As it was, they erroneously believed themselves able to confront the Jews, and "their confidence in the Arab states and their armies was one of the most potent causes of the extensive catastrophe." When Palestinian villagers were worsted in some fight with the Jews they would take refuge in a more distant village, or even cross the Jordan, leaving all their possessions *in situ*,

> hoping to come back a few weeks later and find everything in order. Were not the Arab armies on the point of invading the country to gain a quick victory over the Jewish "gangs" and purify the Holy Land from their filth? Why should they carry away even what it was possible to carry away?

The attitude of the Palestinians towards the Zionists of which Majali gives here an example, the over-confident belligerence and the refusal to compromise or even negotiate with an adversary traditionally held in contempt, has been a standing feature of the Palestine dispute ever since the Balfour Declaration. It figures prominently in the memoirs of one of their leaders, Ahmad al-Shuqayri. These memoirs, *Forty Years of Arab and International Life* (Beirut, 1969), the first in a series, of which four so far have been published, are worth noticing not only because they give a valuable glimpse into Arab politics in, and relating to, Palestine over many decades, but also because Shuqayri is exceptional among Palestinian Arab leaders in having published political memoirs.[3] Shuqayri began to be active in Palestinian Arab politics in the early 1930s, though it was only after 1948, when he was Syrian and then Saudi Arabian delegate at the United Nations, and subsequently head of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, that he came to be widely known. His memoirs clearly reveal that, early or late, his fundamental and unvarying attitude (and in this, of course, he is representative of his people and of their leaders) is an utter refusal of any accommodation with Zionism. Typical of his views is the statement he made as a spokesman for the Arab Office in Jerusalem calling for armed struggle, the setting-up of emergency committees throughout the country, "making the whole fatherland a military barracks, and sending women and children into the neighbouring Arab countries, so that we might set a conflict aflame not to be extinguished until victory and independence. . . ." His attitude remained the same thereafter, as is strikingly shown by a conversation with Count Bernadotte during the conversations at Rhodes in the summer of 1948 which eventually led to an armistice in Palestine. Count Bernadotte had proposed that the Arabs and the Jews should hold informal discussions without prejudice to their respective positions. As spokesman for the Arab delegation, Shuqayri declared that talking, let alone negotiating, with the Jews was out of the question. Bernadotte then pointed out that Arab leaders had in the past quite frequently met Jewish leaders. This, conceded Shuqayri, had been the case, but that was before the rise of the Jewish state; only if this state disappeared, would they be ready to talk or negotiate.

As must again be emphasised, in expressing such sentiments and judgments—whether or not they were politically wise—Shuqayri was expressing the attitudes and feelings of his countrymen. Another passage provides a glimpse into their state of mind during the early part of the Second World War. He describes the great excitement with which they used to listen to German and Italian broadcasts, how he would follow during the night the military communiqués, marking on a map the places being occupied by the victorious Germans, and meet his friends the following morning to discuss triumphs exceeding those of the previous day:

> Our sympathies were with the Axis powers being led by Hitler from victory to victory and with our sympathies went our prayers for the victory of Germany and her allies, and defeat for Britain and her confederates. . . . When the British government announced the formation of a Palestine force to help the war effort, our young men received the directive: do not join the Palestine force, and the response was quasi-unanimous. . . . The activity of the Italian and German air force extended to Palestine, and in September 1940 their airplanes bombed certain targets in Tel-Aviv and Haifa. The joy and excitement produced in our circles was indescribable. An Italian bomb happened to fall in the Acre quarter where I lived, making a large crater but causing no damage. The assistant governor of Acre . . . visited me to report that the British governor . . . had told him jokingly that the bomb was destined for Ahmad Shuqayri. I said: This is fine; upon me and upon my enemies, O Lord!

As this passage suggests, Shuqayri is a man of eloquence and repartee. It is this gift which made for him a world-wide reputation. His position as United Nations delegate for Syria, and later on Saudi Arabia, gave him a large audience and wonderful scope for oratorical jousting. As his memoirs show, he is very proud of his verbal campaigns against the Zionists in New York, giving long summaries of his interventions and rejoinders, and recording the fact that eight volumes of his United Nations speeches have been published.

> I put him [Abba Eban] to flight and with him Golda Meir, the Prime Minister of Israel, and with them all the Israeli delegates in all the committees of the United Nations. I rubbed their faces in the dust and their noses in the mud, on the battlefield of justice and logic.

[3] The Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husayni, published some years ago a short, scrappy and disappointing book which cannot bear comparison to any of the works discussed here.

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The fight was wide-ranging, and the most unlikely subject became the occasion of a skirmish, or even a regular battle. For example, Mrs Meir referred in a speech to the slave trade in Africa and alluded to the role of the Arabs in this traffic. Shuqayri, in reply, makes a speech, quoting from various encyclopaedias, to show how the Jews had been the prominent slave traders in various epochs.

> I was reading these extracts to [the delegates of] the African states. They were listening to me while their eyes were on the Israeli minister, who was either smoothing down her hair with her fingers, or leaning towards her assistant. I said, addressing Mrs Golda Meir: "If the minister returns to the subject of the slave trade, I will speak on the role of Israel in white slavery. You understand what I mean." The minister kept silent, because in fact she knew what I meant, and knew the role of Jewesses beginning with the story of Esther, down to our own day.

SHUQAYRI'S ACCOUNT of his United Nations days has an epic quality about it, but the battle is a mere battle of words, and the epic is therefore a mock-epic. Grandiloquence has replaced the deeds of valour which epic celebrated. These memoirs, therefore, in their fashion also mark the failure of political action, the terrible hazards lying in the exercise of political power—the hazard of emasculation, impotence, or even (as in the Palestinian case) ruin pure and simple. Owing to his antecedents Shuqayri himself is aware that to take one's political fate into one's hands does not necessarily lead to success.

Shuqayri comes from a family of Acre notables, and his father As'ad Shuqayr was a pillar of the Young Turk régime in the Levant, the Mufti of the Ottoman Fourth Army and the confidant of its commander Jamal Pasha. After the First World War he used to witness many debates in his father's *divan* between those (like his father) who believed that the Ottoman connection would have been best for the Arabs, and those (like his father-in-law) who sympathised with Arab nationalism. He tells us that these discussions came back to him some forty years later after the Six Day War of 1967

> . . . and the old question recurred: Was it better to stick with the Ottoman state or to follow the Allies? I went back, in my mind, to this old question, and reviewing the progress of Zionism during a period of fifty years, I decided that our generation had been grievously at fault, and that Ottoman rule with all its dangers—with which I was familiar—was preferable to these Arab "autonomies", these defeated statelets, put to flight by Zionism in three wars.

Shuqayri not only evokes gratefully Sultan Abd al-Hamid who—as he told the Turkish foreign minister—knew how to resist Theodor Herzl's blandishments, he is also at times very bitter at the record of the Palestine Arab leaders between the wars. Of these leaders undoubtedly the most prominent was the Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husayni. Shuqayri is in no doubt that what he sought was personal power:

> The glory of "His Eminence" came before the glory of the homeland. The homeland fell and with it the glory. During the festival of Nabi Musa there was a glorious and splendid slogan: The sword of religion is Hajj Amin (*sayf al-din al-Hajj Amin*). The festival is gone and with it the slogan.

He compares the Mufti with his relative Musa Kazim who preceded him in the leadership of the Palestine Arabs. The latter led the movement for a decade or so with his limited mentality and narrow views, but this is how he was and he could not help it. Hajj Amin was the leader for another decade or so "during which the great catastrophe happened. There were many differences between them . . . among which", Shuqayri says in an eloquent play on words, "was that Musa Kazim was much mourned [on his death] while Hajj Amin has caused many people to mourn (*Musa Kazim bakahu al-nas kathiran wa'l-Hajj Amin abka kathiran min al-nas.*)"

The sanguinary character of Palestine Arab politics in the late 1930s touched Shuqayri very closely and may explain the bitterness of this remark. His brother was a doctor and used to treat the wounded among the Arab guerrillas in the north of Palestine. He was called out one day to take care of a wounded man, and was murdered by fellow-Arabs while on his way to answer the call. Shuqayri was then in Beirut, and the Mufti—who was then a refugee there—came to offer his condolences. An Arab diplomat was also present and Shuqayri quotes this "immortal" remark which the latter addressed to Hajj Amin:

> The Arabs, the Jews, and the British differ over everything, but agree on one thing: the British kill the Arab, the Jews kill the Arab, and the Arab kills the Arab.

Comic Interludes

THE MUFTI'S FLIGHT from Jerusalem in 1937 may be seen in retrospect to mark a decisive change in the fortunes of Arab Palestine.

Up to then it was the Palestine Arabs who had the initiative in deciding through their own leaders—however such leaders came to assume their position—what to do in order to fight the Zionist menace. Thereafter the neighbouring Arab states took up the defence and protection of their interests. Shuqayri's memoirs are equally copious on the lamentable results this intervention has produced, as on the mistakes and failures of the native Palestinian leadership. Another recent book of memoirs, *Roving Ambassador* by Nasir al-Din al-Nashashibi (Beirut, 1970), is particularly

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devoted to the way in which the cause of Palestine has been defended by the Arab states.

Nashashibi comes from a well-known Jerusalem family, and as we learn from Shuqayri's memoirs he—along with Ruhi al-Khatib (who was to become Mayor of Jerusalem), Raja'i al-Husayni, Burhan al-Dajani (both members of prominent Palestinian families), Albert Hourani and Wasfi al-Tall (who later became Prime Minister of Jordan and was murdered by terrorists in Cairo)—worked with Shuqayri at the Arab Office in Jerusalem, set up by the Arab League to disseminate information about and propagate the Arab case on Palestine. After 1948, Nashashibi made a reputation for himself in Cairo as a journalist of talent. In 1965, at the suggestion of President Nasser, he was appointed Arab League ambassador to Europe, charged with presenting and defending the case of the Palestinians in Western Europe. *Roving Ambassador* is the account of his European experiences and of the ways of Arab diplomacy.

From this book, too, there emanates a powerful impression of futility, powerlessness, and despair. To believe Nashashibi, the countries of Western Europe are, as he puts it, so many "Zionist fortresses" which it is vain to hope to reduce or capture. Thus, he found the West Germans to be mere slaves at the feet of Israel; the Israeli ambassador to Bonn behaves "as though he had a thousand heads, a thousand eyes and ears, and a thousand mouths." The chapter in which he gives an account of his visit to Holland is entitled: "Out of fear of the Jews, the Arabs here are Jews"; that on France: "In the whole of France, we have only de Gaulle, while our enemies have the whole of France." This demoralisation in the face of Zionist activity is not peculiar to himself, but seems rather to be widely prevalent among Arab diplomats serving in Europe. He reports, for instance, a dialogue with a counsellor at the Egyptian embassy who comes to meet him at the railway station in The Hague:

> He quickly pulled me by the hand and bundled me into his car, saying: "May God preserve!"
> Surprised, I said: "What?"
> He said: "The Jews. . . ."
> I said: "What about them?"
> He said: "God be praised they did not know who you were, or else you would have been involved in a catastrophe."
> I said: "Why?"
> He said: "A week ago the secretary-general of the Arab League, Mr Hassuna, was here and we had to meet him at the back door of the station, for fear of a Jewish attack."
> I said: "And who told you that the Jews were going to attack the secretary of the Arab League?"
> He said: "No one. But it was by way of taking precautions!"
> I started laughing like a madman.
>
> But the embassy counsellor was driving at a prodigious speed while saying to me: "Holland is no more than a Jewish colony! The Dutch are more Zionist than the Jews of Tel-Aviv! The atmosphere is poisoned, the air is poisoned, the work is poisoned. We find ourselves here in a worse state than prisoners of war. It is no use!"

Nashashibi, as may be seen, uses this dead-pan style of reporting for an ironical purpose. But his most mordant satire is reserved for Arab statesmen, and particularly for the officials of the Arab League. The League, which the Lebanese ambassador at London described in a conversation with him as "an old people's home", Nashashibi holds responsible for the disaster which befell his people. He in fact dedicates his book to Jerusalem, "one of the victims of the League of Arab States." A victim, one gathers, of the selfishness and frivolity of a bureaucratic organisation which regards its own self-preservation as the highest public interest. On his appointment as roving ambassador, Nashashibi visited the Secretary-General of the Arab League in order to seek instructions, and the comic dialogue which ensued crisply and savagely proves and illustrates his point. The Secretary-General advises Nashashibi to avoid, while on his mission, any controversial subject:

> I said: "But supposing I was invited to a press conference, say in Bonn, and a foreign journalist asks me about the attitude of the Arab League to Socialist propaganda, how do I answer?"
> Hassuna said: "Do not answer him!"
> I said: "If another journalist asks me about the attitude of the League to the Islamic Alliance, were I to attack the alliance I fear Saudi Arabia would be vexed with me, while if I were to support it Cairo would disapprove; and both are members of the League. What shall I do?"
> Hassuna said: "Confine your remarks to Islam, and ignore the Islamic Alliance!"
> I said: "And Arab unity, what shall I say about it? A state such as the Lebanon is a member of the League and does not support Arab unity; while some of the other states do support it. What are your directives on this subject?"
> He said: "Tell them that the Arabs are one nation!"
> I said: "But this is not the view of the Lebanon."
> He said: "Make use of your diplomatic tact and do not go into details."
> I said: "And the Arab Common Market, should I speak in support of it?"
> He said: "Indeed."
> I said: "But seven Arab states have refused to join the Market, thus showing that they do not believe in it or in its advantages."
> He said: "We hope that a long time will not elapse before these states will come to believe in the utility of the Market."
> I said: "When?"
> He said: "Within the next ten years."
> I said: "But I am leaving for Europe tomorrow."
> He said: "Use your discretion, Sir, use your discretion!"
> I said: "There is also an Arab state which calls, by the voice of its President, for peace with Israel. Is this the policy of the Arab League, or do I have

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the right to attack the President of this state?"

Hassuna said: "Beware of attacking anybody!"

I said: "Should I defend the idea of a peace with Israel?"

He said: "Certainly not."

I said: "How do I answer a journalist who asks about the view of the League on this subject?"

Hassuna said: "I am tired, O my brother, why do you want to increase my weariness?"

I understood, and passed on to another subject. I said to the secretary of the League: "Where do you wish me, I mean in which European country shall I begin my work?"

He said, as though he were a great army commander making dispositions for a battle: "Do you know those round counters with which children play? Take a number of red counters and spread before you the map of Europe. Put a red counter on Germany, and a similar one on London. Put a green counter on Geneva, another on France, and a third on Italy."

I said: "What shall I put on Holland, Belgium and the Scandinavian countries?"

He said: "On Holland put a counter which is neither red nor green, a yellow one for instance. As for Brussels, it is the headquarters of the Common Market so it would be a good idea to put a red counter on it. As for the Scandinavian countries, they are not very important for us, so put no counter on them. When you have done all this, write to me and I will reply."

Another conversation which Nashashibi reports is also worth quoting at length. It took place in Paris in the autumn of 1965 between him and Dr Mahmud Fawzi, when the Egyptian foreign minister was accompanying Marshal Amer, vice-president of the Republic, on an official visit. If the comic writer is one who uses laughter and ridicule to make his audience aware of the human predicament, then in this passage Nashashibi shows himself a very skilled writer of comedy. The author visits Dr Fawzi at breakfast in the Crillon hotel to find out news of Amer's discussions with the French government, and the following dialogue ensues:

Myself: "What news, Doctor?"

Fawzi: "The machine is working as usual . . . working."

Myself: "I mean the news of the Marshal and his Paris visit."

Fawzi: "The important thing is not the preface but the book!"

Myself: "Do you mean the preface to the visit?"

Fawzi: "I mean that the essence should be as clean as the appearance, or else everything is lost."

Myself: "Do you mean the essence of the visit and its appearance?"

Fawzi: "I mean that we must not lose ourselves in formalities, and let go of the basic things."

Myself: "I hope that the Marshal has achieved something through the visit?"

Fawzi: "The important thing is to achieve the achievement of success."

Myself: "Do I understand that the Marshal has not succeeded?"

Fawzi: "Success may come in either way: through the strength of your own arm or through the weakness of others."

Myself: "In which way has the Marshal succeeded?"

Fawzi: "I admire Montesquieu's saying that one of the requirements of success is that you should appear like a stupid man donning the dress of a wise man."

Myself: "And has the Marshal donned the wise man's dress?"

Fawzi: "The most important thing is conviction."

Myself: "And have the French become aware of the solidity of the Marshal's conviction?"

Fawzi: "We work with an ebullient spirit."

Myself: "And has this spirit made an impression on the government in Paris?"

Fawzi: "I did say to you, O my brother, that the important thing is not the preface but the book."

Dr Fawzi handed me a piece of buttered bread saying: "Paris butter is like Paris. . . ."

I said: "Tasty?"

He said: "Transparent."

I said: "Light?"

He said: "Rich."

I said: "Wholesome?"

He said: "Necessary." . . .

Dr Fawzi accompanied me to the door of the apartment, saying: "Please treat what you have heard as a secret between the two of us."

Chains of Command

BITING SATIRE and a parade of the pompous and shifty incompetents in authority are Nashashibi's means for comprehending the Arab political predicament. It is the spirit of comedy which presides over his enterprise. But in the memoirs of Munif al-Razzaz, *The Bitter Experience* (Beirut, 1967), we discover the workings of a sombre and tormented spirit.

Razzaz is a prominent Ba'th ideologist who comes from Jordan. In April 1965, following internecine and ferocious disputes within the Ba'th leadership, he was appointed national secretary-general of the Party, in succession to the well-known Michel Aflaq—one of the original founders of the Ba'th—to whom some of the most powerful Syrian Ba'thist officers were by then implacably opposed. In the event, Razzaz retained his office for less than a year. He was rudely ejected by the *coup d'état* of 23 February 1966, notorious for the manner in which the partisans of General Jdid mowed down the followers of General Hafiz and then hosed their blood off the streets. The victors announced Razzaz's arrest and forthcoming trial, but he succeeded in escaping and found refuge in Beirut where he wrote and published these memoirs.

In them, Razzaz makes a great effort to account for a disaster for which the ideology he embraced and expounded had not prepared him. The ideology of the Ba'th was democratic, populist, and socialist. It looked forward to the spiritual and political liberation of Arab Man, and the union of all Arabs in one state which ensured for everyone dignity and prosperity. That the state should become the sport of conspiratorial and murderous officers was envisaged in the writings neither of Aflaq, Bitar, Arsuzi—the

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founding fathers—nor of Razzaz himself. What, then, had gone wrong? To provide an explanation Razzaz goes into long ideological disquisitions, and manages to get entangled in his own explanations. These explanations, the reader suspects, serve not so much to explain as to provide comfort and justification to one who has seen his political world tumbling about his ears. The one possibility which it does not occur to Razzaz to consider is that the very ideological style which is the hallmark of the Ba'th itself can lead to the degraded and sanguinary politics which so horrify him. In effect, his explanation itself begs the question. The misadventures of the Ba'th Razzaz somehow attributes to the fact that the Party was in reality two parties,

> one party on the side of the people, of liberty, of unity and of socialism; and another party against the people, against liberty, against unity and against socialism, and that the *coup d'état* slaughtered the aims of the people and its expectations.

The people, he also believes, was with the Party against the members of the Party.

However implausible this explanation is, the situation for which it purports to account is not in dispute. It is one in which, as Razzaz puts it,

> Governments have taken the place of the masses, and become identical with politics and politicians. In each country a very insignificant number of politicians rules, nay in many of them only one citizen has the right of political action, and even the prime minister becomes an executive official.

One of the most valuable features of Razzaz's memoirs is that they describe graphically how this came to pass. Razzaz tells us that at the *coup d'état* of 8 March 1963 when the Ba'th—following its vicissitudes in the United Arab Republic and after—once more came to power in Syria, there was only an "insignificant" number of Ba'thist officers in the army. What the successful conspirators therefore began by doing—without, it would seem, any objection from Aflaq, Bitar, Razzaz, or the other civilian ideologues who later raised a hue and a cry against the militarisation of the Party—was to pack the army with Ba'thist officers. This done, and Nasser's followers bloodily eliminated, the various Ba'thist factions began a long, tortuous and bloody struggle which ended eight years later with the triumph—for the time being—of the present ruler of Syria, Hafiz al-Asad, and one of the many casualties of which was Razzaz. To Razzaz this internecine struggle was

> a military struggle between two groups occasionally invoking the support of civilian and political elements on which they leaned, and by which they covered their nakedness, a mere struggle for power, paltry, ridiculous, humiliating and depressing. As for the people, it had to be content with looking on and grieving. It understood the reality of the struggle better than the contestants themselves, knew itself to be helpless and quite unable, even if it had wanted to, to shift the balance in this or in that direction.
>
> It was not only the people which was powerless to influence the struggle; the Party organisation, its leadership and its congresses were likewise powerless. The national Command [*i.e.* Aflaq, Razzaz *et al.*] had speech for its weapon, in a fight where no weapon except the tank, the cannon, and the machine-gun was any use.

Razzaz has many arresting descriptions of this fight. The two rivals at the time were the Sunnite Amin al-Hafiz and the Alawite Salah Jdid. We see them confronting one another like birds of prey with hooded, watchful, expressionless eyes, waiting for the enemy to make a false step, to stumble or relax his attention, in order instantly to pounce down with a shriek and tear him apart with beak and claws. A casual footnote conjures up a picture of these chieftains always moving about under the protection of a gang of armed officers. Hafiz, says Razzaz, used to come to Party meetings with forty of his own bodyguard, while Asad—then Jdid's ally—would come with twenty retainers; and these mobsters would occupy the corridors, and the staircases, the offices and the reception rooms of the Party headquarters. We follow the manoeuvrings, the patient and devious tactics, the secret and complicated intrigues by which the Lieutenant-General (Hafiz) and the Major-General (Jdid) for something like a year undermined and sought to destroy one another. Razzaz gives, for instance, the details of a pretty stratagem by which Jdid contrived to detach from Hafiz some of his most important supporters. He nominated as minister of war and as chief-of-staff two of Hafiz's followers. The latter, taken by surprise, hesitated to endorse his enemy's nomination. This convinced his partisans that Hafiz wanted to monopolise all positions for himself, and they turned against him. In the end the Sunnite bit the dust, and the Alawite succeeded him. His victory may have been due to the clannishness and secretiveness inculcated in the Alawites by their esoteric sect. But, if so, then Jdid met his superior in his fellow-Alawite and fellow-villager, Asad, who toppled and imprisoned him in 1971. The fortunes of those who seek to govern a polity like Syria irresistibly remind one of the priest of Nemi who, as Frazer recounts, has to slay his predecessor in order to become the guardian of the golden bough, but who is himself, in turn, fated to be slain by his successor.

Resurrection & Mockery

THE BLOODY RITES of Syrian politics in the 1960s inspired not only Razzaz's bitter and disillusioned chronicle, but also what is perhaps the most remarkable and revealing book of political memoirs to appear in the Arab world in recent decades. This is *The Ba'th* (Beirut, 1969) by Sami al-Jundi. Jundi—a

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Syrian Isma'ili from the Syrian Isma'ili centre, Salimiyya, by profession a dentist and a Ba'thist of long standing—played an active role in Ba'thist conspiracies and political activities in the first half of the 1960s. But his known Nasserite sympathies led to his removal from the centre of the stage and his appointment as Ambassador to Paris. After the Six Day War he was accused—in what he claims to have been a frame-up by his own Foreign Minister—of conducting clandestine negotiations with the Israelis. He was recalled to Damascus and imprisoned for a time in the notorious Mezze prison. Upon his release, he was allowed to leave for Beirut. He has since led a refugee's life, and is now—as appears from his latest book—again practising dentistry, in Tunis.

For Razzaz, the mishaps of Syria and the Ba'th are the consequences of, and to be explained by, ideological deviation. Jundi's vision may, by contrast, be called tragic, if by tragedy we mean the exhibition of a *peripeteia* which inspires in the spectator surprise, pity, and terror. In this sense *The Ba'th* is a tragedy. Its tragic effect is enhanced by Jundi's style, which surely makes him one of the masters of modern Arabic prose. It is a style which breaks the neck of that empty magniloquence which has been the hallmark and the bane of literary Arabic in the period of its decadence. It is subtle, sinuous, and allusive, blending in a successful amalgam foreign words with colloquial and literary expressions; it glows with a sombre fire, smouldering with a desolate, anguished lyricism which, uncontrolled, might have spilled over into hysterical lamentation. The style is evoked by and adapted to the subject and to the profound despair which the situation of the Arabs inspires in him. He speaks of this despair in the preface to his latest collection of short stories, a despair the expression of which, whether in the memoirs or in the fiction of which he is an accomplished writer, he presents as an offering to his bruised and maltreated country.

Jundi begins his account with the early history of the Party which came to be known as the Ba'th or Resurrection. Its origins lie in the activities of two schoolmasters, Zaki al-Arsuzi (an Alawite from Alexandretta) and Michel Aflaq (a Greek Orthodox from Damascus). Arsuzi was a leader of Arab resistance to the Turks in Alexandretta. When this mixed region was ceded to Turkey by the French mandatory in 1939, Arsuzi settled in Damascus where Jundi, then a young student, came to know him as the leader of a small group, the Arab Nationalist Party, the principles of which, established by Arsuzi, were the embryo of later Ba'thist doctrines. Arsuzi "was good-looking, elegant, and of a gentle appearance, but when he spoke he became a fierce rebel, his big green eyes flashing with a ferocious, destructive gleam, as though he was revolution personified. . . ." Jundi records the occasion, on 29 November 1940, when he and four other young men met in the room of one of them and listened to a four-hour lecture by Arsuzi on Democracy, Communism, and Nazism, beginning with Descartes and ending with H. S. Chamberlain. At the end of this discourse which "plumbed the depths" and was "warm and emotional", Arsuzi suggested the formation of an Arab Resurrection Party. Jundi became the treasurer of the small group, and with the subscriptions bought a high chair for the Master and low stools made of straw for the disciples. On a wall in the room where they held their meetings one of them wrote in pencil: "We live here under the banner of Arab unity."

> We lived [writes Jundi of this period] through this hope, strangers in our society which gradually increased our isolation: rebels against all the old values, enemies to all the conventions of humanity, rejecting all ceremonies, relationships and religions. We sought the fight everywhere; we were an unrelenting pickaxe. Society persecuted us, and so we defied it and began to destroy all institutions with much intelligence and much stupidity, like children growing up who with time became more childish. . . .
>
> We were accused of atheism, and this was correct in spite of what the Ba'thists later pretended by way of exculpation. We believed in religious feeling, in the mysticism of all religions, and in their wholly human tendency. As for the religion of the others, we were wholly opposed to it.
>
> We were racialists, admiring Nazism, reading its books and the source of its thought, particularly Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra,* Fichte's *Addresses to the German Nation,* and H. S. Chamberlain's *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* which revolves on race. We were the first to think of translating *Mein Kampf.*
>
> Whoever has lived during this period in Damascus will appreciate the inclination of the Arab people to Nazism, for Nazism was the power which could serve as its champion, and he who is defeated will by nature love the victor. But our belief was rather different. . . .
>
> We were idealists, basing social relationships on love. The Master used to speak about Christ, and I think he was influenced by Nietzsche's book, *The Origin of Tragedy.* He took the pre-Islamic period for his ideal, calling it the golden age of the Arabs. Like Nietzsche, he believed that Socrates was the beginning of that logic and dialectic which destroyed the spontaneity of Greece; and he saw in *kalām* [philosophical theology] the decadence of the Arabs. He went even further and took up only what was pre-Islamic in Islam. He was a man who rejected, and with him we also rejected.
>
> In discussion with him in 1946 I invoked the Koran. He took exception to my religious tendency, saying: "You are a monk in the guise of a revolutionary." I objected, saying: "Belief in ideas takes on a religious character." He answered: "Revolution itself is a mystic belief." I found in conversation that he had not, up to then, read the Koran seriously. When he did so later on, many of his

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views changed. Few may know that he began to study Arabic in 1940, having preferred until then to speak in French.

We used to read, write, and translate. The foundation of the group library preceded that of the Party. We did not have the means to buy many books, so we brought together in the Master's house all those which we possessed and they filled the sill of the small window overlooking the street.

THIS SMALL GROUP OF YOUNG DISCIPLES—never more than twelve university students and a scarcely greater number of pupils from the main secondary school in Damascus—worked upon by this fervent schoolmaster who unveiled, in French, all the glittering marvels of the European ideologies, excited by this daring rejection of the traditions of their society, and seized by the dream of its total renovation, constituted, then, a nucleus of the Ba'th Party. What they were like we may gather from Jundi's description as quoted above, and from another passage of his describing the change which came over them as a result of Arsuzi's indoctrination: "... the Party became a collection of anarchists who were one in their thinking and logic, explaining events in almost the same way, trusting in nobody, loving the people and hating individuals, venerating the whole and hating the parts."

Arsuzi's group dispersed when he left Damascus in 1944. Almost all of them were, however, also members of another group also calling itself the Ba'th and led by the two schoolmasters, Salah al-Din al-Bitar and Michel Aflaq. It was this latter Ba'th which was to flourish in post-war Syrian politics, and of which Aflaq became the acknowledged and venerated ideologue. Aflaq began first to be known not as a political thinker, but as a writer of short stories. And it is as an artist that Jundi sees him, who by going into politics betrayed his real vocation. Aflaq, thinks Jundi, looked upon the Ba'th as his artistic creation. "He wished the Party to be a painter's canvas, but the colours turned out to be violent, and he sometimes hated it as much as he loved it." "I always used to say about him," continues Jundi, "that the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party was Michel Aflaq's suicide."

All these young Syrian intellectuals, then, whether inspired by Arsuzi or Aflaq—who themselves took their ideas from Nietzsche or H. S. Chamberlain or Alfred Rosenberg (Jundi says that in 1940 he was looking for a copy of the *Myth of the Twentieth Century* in Damascus, and finally found a French abridgment of it belonging to Aflaq which he borrowed from one of his students)—were radically disaffected towards the political institutions and the social arrangements of post-War Syria. Their fervour was incandescent, their intentions of the highest, and they were determined by their exertions and example to save Syria and the Arabs. Looking back now on a quarter-of-a-century of Syrian politics, Jundi contrasts the high hopes of the past with the present degradation.

Who would have believed during the school year 1940–41 [he begins his memoirs by asking] that the Ba'th would end in all this mockery?[4] Who among us would have thought that the word, Ba'thist, would become an accusation which some of us would rebut with bitter scorn?

Who among us would have supposed that a day would come when we would be ashamed of our past; would flee from it as from a sin we have deliberately committed and for which we are treated with ignominy; would almost deny having been part of it; and would hide our identity? Was it, then, delusive to have been proud of it and to have cherished it?

Our sacrifices, our youth wasted on the roads among the people, our dreams and our faith, were they then all a mockery?

Almost nobody credits the fact that we believed in a cause. They insist that we are informers, writers of delations, torturers, killers. They accuse us of treason. They pretend that all that we had said was opportunism and trickery, that we so perfected the actor's art that the people were deceived by us.

The evil, for Jundi, began with a fatal illusion:

We thought that the epochs of decadence had come to an end with our predecessors among the politicians, and that we were the glorious beginning of a new civilisation, when in fact we were the last exemplars of backwardness, and a desolating expression of it.

We wanted to be a resurrection [*ba'th*] of signal deeds and of heroism, but what was resurrected *through us—when we came to power*—was no more than the period of the Mamlukes.

The Ba'th, then, has proved to be, Jundi laments, the pall-bearer of the Syrian people. This sad and unexpected outcome is a consequence of the Party's involvement with the officers. The soldiers whom the Ba'th had hoped to make the servants of its ideology have in fact taken it over and become its masters. When two civilian nominees were elected to head the Party's politburo at the instigation of the three military leaders Hafiz, Jdid and Asad (who were then allies), a joke—which Jundi recounts—became current in Damascus. It was to the effect that three soldiers governed Syria by means of two shoes [shoes being lowly unclean objects].

A second aspect of Ba'thist misgovernment can be seen in its economic policy. The nationalisation of industrial enterprises was ill thought-out and, finally, ruinous. Jundi gives as an example the fact that in a Japanese textile factory a worker looks after 260 shuttles, while in a Syrian nationalised establishment the figure is only 7 shuttles per worker. As for land reform, its real basis, declares Jundi, was not the welfare

[4] Untranslatable play on words: *ba'th*, resurrection and *'abath*, mockery.

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of the peasant class but the mere dispersal of private property to satisfy local animosities.

A third aspect of Ba'thist rule was its terrible capriciousness. The ministry of information of which he was for a while in charge gives a true picture of the régime: "In it I was everything and nothing. I could dismiss and punish whom I wished and as I wished, but I had no power to appoint even a temporary announcer. Official appointments followed a curious routine on the pretext of doing away with routine. . . . The appointment of an announcer had, and still has, to be approved by the council of ministers." It was the same in other ministries, and chaos reigned supreme: "The lists of dismissals were the index of a minister's success. The members of the Party, their relatives and fellow-tribesmen were claiming the rewards of the struggle and the rights of kinship. . . . Dismissal was therefore necessary in order for new appointments to be made." What Jundi is describing here is clearly only a modern version of the most ancient and the most durable form of government, namely Oriental Despotism. A further characteristic of Oriental Despotism is what may be called its Thousand-and-One-Nights quality: overnight the beggar becomes a king, and almost immediately reverts to a beggar again. This quality is also present in Ba'thist rule, as appears from another remark of Jundi's:

> In the whirlpool of March [1963] you thought yourself to be exercising responsibility, planning and making history, but you became suddenly nothing. A little while later you saw yourself again as very important, and then, again, nothing.

BUT WHAT RECURS LIKE A SOMBRE LITANY through Jundi's book is the illegal and atrocious violence which the official classes inflict and suffer in turn. This violence came in with military rule, and owing to Ba'thist involvement with the military, it hangs like a millstone round the neck of the Ba'th Party. Torture as a method of government came in with Za'im at the first *coup d'état,* and all his successors have had recourse to it, "as though", exclaims Jundi, "the whip has become the warp of modern Syrian history. Governments and régimes succeed one another only so that the whip may be transmitted from hand to hand. If one becomes tired of holding it, one entrusts another with it, and the latter becomes skilful and expert in branding the victims' bodies with its fire."

Za'im was the victim of what he had initiated, and his execution was plain murder. His successor Shishakli was clearly possessed by blood lust. Jundi sees himself as both the victim and the accomplice of violence. He was imprisoned twice, the second time by the Ba'thists in 1968, but the first time was in 1962, after an abortive Ba'thist *coup d'état* in which he was implicated:

> I found that the only reality in modern Syrian history was Mezze military prison and the whip, everything else being an illusion. . . . During August torture reached an inconceivable height. . . . They used to wrap the prisoners from head to foot in woollen blankets leaving only one small orifice to enable them to breathe. They left them for days like this in temperatures which burned and scalded, forbidding all movement and speech, with the guard standing ready to whip whoever dared so much as to whisper.

Exactly a year after his prison experiences, Jundi was minister of information following the *coup d'état* of 8 March 1963. In this *coup* Ba'thists and Nasserites worked together, but they later fell out with one another over reunion with Egypt. On 18 July of the same year the Nasserites attempted to topple their erstwhile partners, but the Ba'thists foiled them, killing that day alone 170 Nasserites. A bloody repression followed. Military courts handed down death verdicts on the nod, and they were executed on the spot. One evening Jundi was at the ministry of information, and an official told him of a television film which was going to be shown and about which he was doubtful:

> I went to the projection studio and saw something unbelievable. The members of the court had decided that the people should share in their sport, and not miss the joys of victory. They arranged therefore for the scenes of the executions to be recorded: the prisoner led from the cell to the place of execution, the blindfolding, the order to fire, the blood pouring out from the mouth, the knees folding under the victim, his body leaning forward as the cords were loosened, his mouth open in order to kiss the earth his mother. I said nothing. I went out and an officer asked me gaily: "How did you like it, Doctor?" I said: "Is this the Ba'th?" He said: "I do not understand." I said: "You will never understand!"

Some months later those Nasserites who were not executed in July began coming out of Mezze prison, and he saw the tortures which they had suffered. When he recalls the oath that he and other Ba'thists had taken to transform Mezze into a tourist hotel, he laughs with bitterness, for was he not one of those who held the whip, a torturer among torturers? That it should all have come to this, that the schoolboy's fervour and the student's aspiration should put him in the end alternately among the hunters and the hunted, this is the tragic irony which gives Jundi's accents their poignancy. The bleak light of despair illumines the writer's vision, and this vision is his gift to his countrymen. As the dedication to a haunting allegorical work of his, *My Friend Ilyas* (Beirut, 1969), declares:

> *Damascus, O fountain of my tenderness,*
> *O blonde among cities, O branch of jasmine,*
> *I offer up to your sorrows this strangled corpse.*

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AUTHORS & CRITICS

A Reply to Brian Inglis

The Poor Who Were With Us

By W. H. Hutt

IN 1925, I submitted an article to *Economica* entitled *The Factory System of the Early Nineteenth Century*. It appeared in 1926. Until only recently it engendered no opposition or criticism of which I am aware. But now, after 45 years, it has been attacked in ENCOUNTER by Brian Inglis. Not only is my youthful contribution assailed but doubt is cast on the findings of eminent economic historians who, unlike myself, wrote with great authority on the subject of controversy. I reply not so much in defence of my own intellectual integrity in 1926 as to vindicate disinterested scholars who tried to discover and understand the past.

Inglis sets out to debunk John Clapham, T. S. Ashton, Dorothy George, R. M. Hartwell and other historians of stature not by substantial refutation, but by subtle misrepresentation and various polemical tricks. His broad thesis is that, contrary to what these authorities have tried to show, the Industrial Revolution in Britain brought poverty, suffering, and degradation for the masses.

Early in his article, he alleges that the authors he is criticising (he calls them "the new economic historians") have argued that

> to be acceptable . . . evidence must be quantifiable. . . . Only by sophisticated statistical analysis of the available economic data . . . can change in material conditions be measured.

On this half-truth he largely builds his thesis.

Now it is true that *to measure* economic change with any accuracy, both statistical techniques and the availability of relevant quantifiable data are indispensable. And it is true also that, to the extent to which the relevant data happen to have been recorded, it is the economic historian's duty to use that data and get all the assistance possible from the statistician's expertness. But those scholars who have drawn attention to the growing material well-being of the masses which accompanied the emergence of industrial capitalism, while making the fullest use of such quantifiable material as has been available and usable, and while doing their best to encourage the search for similar data which may have been overlooked, have warned their students—with no equivocation—of *the limited meaning of any tables and graphs they have been able to present.*

How any historian could have been more explicit on this point than Ashton it is hard to imagine. Yet it has been his example and exhortations which have largely inspired subsequent worth-while statistical investigations—studies which *have* advanced our knowledge in statistical form.

Ashton's exposure of the limitations of such researches (which he praises and, when necessary, criticises ruthlessly) together with persistent stress on the arithmetical difficulties of measuring changes in prices, wage-rates, and living standards, makes up a very large part of his second essay in the symposium on which Inglis vents his spleen—*Capitalism and the Historians* (Edited by F. A. Hayek). Ashton presents, indeed, with scrupulous detachment, such statistical data as he feels are relevant, leaving it largely to the reader to make his own judgment about the significance to be attached to them or the reasonableness of his (Ashton's) own broad conclusions drawn from them. At the same time he relies mainly on *other* indications of improving general well-being, such as significant changes in the composition of consumption; and these non-statistical evidences constitute (in my own judgment, at least) the most telling part of his two essays in the symposium. To express this opinion is not to belittle the importance of the tables and graphs he presents and dissects.

Studies which, I think, Ashton inspired have ferreted out further (formerly unutilised) sources of statistical material. These studies show, in the words of Hartwell's 1959 judgment, "an unambiguous increase" in living standards over the Industrial Revolution. This demonstration also has angered Inglis.

INGLIS LEAVES THE IMPRESSION that Clapham's conclusion—that the condition of the average worker improved—is completely refuted because Clapham relied *inter alia* on Silbering's cost-of-living index. Ashton showed that this index must have been unreliable, except on

W. H. HUTT *was Professor of Commerce, University of Cape Town and is now Professor Emeritus. Brian Inglis's article on "The Poor Who Were With Us", a critique of the new economic historians following on from his book "Poverty and the Industrial Revolution" (1971), appeared in the September 1971* ENCOUNTER.

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certain assumptions (*e.g.*, that retail and wholesale prices were correlated). It is a tribute to Ashton's scholarly integrity that he did not hesitate drastically to devalue this evidence; for it seemed to support a broad thesis which he shared with Clapham. But Inglis describes Ashton's rejection of dubious support as "almost a throw-away passage." Inglis claims that it is a "demolition" of the "pretensions" not only of Ashton himself but of Clapham, Dorothy George, Hartwell and others.

This instance alone, I claim, demonstrates the irresponsible nature of Inglis's attack. For Ashton fully accepts the evidence of Bowley and Wood that real wage-rates as a whole had followed an upward trend over the course of the Industrial Revolution (although not all individuals or groups enjoyed increased real earnings). Ashton refers to their findings approvingly and adds: "Generally it is now agreed that for the majority the gain in real wages was substantial."[1]

Actually, in the very passages which follow his rather devastating criticism of Silberling, Ashton gives plenty of evidence of an impressive and quite general improvement of conditions—after probable set-backs due to war, inflation, and post-war deflation; and in spite of the burden of tariff protection and other Mercantilist survivals down to the "hungry '40s." But there is also ample non-statistical evidence of such improvement earlier in that article, and in the other contribution he made to Hayek's symposium. Moreover the symposium as a whole—including Hayek's Introduction—is a remarkable and succinct source of what seem to me to be unchallengeable facts in support of the thesis that Inglis wishes to destroy.

MORE SERIOUS, HOWEVER, Inglis manages to leave the impression that the historians he classes as "the Optimists" or "the new economic historians" regarded the labouring masses as living in a sort of idyllic golden age during the period, say, 1790–1850. Such an impression is absurdly false. All the writers he is criticising regarded as obvious the fact that conditions then were *deplorable* if judged against the standards of tolerable domestic and working life that industrial capitalism was producing for later generations. What the historians attacked *did* believe was that a large class, which included the factory employees, benefited substantially from the growth in productive power, while the benefits accruing to another class (farm workers and the unskilled generally) were less certain—possibly because unbridled breeding diluted the benefits. Yet there *is* evidence that even the poorest classes, whose incomes could cover only the barest necessities, would have been gradually including among their "bare necessities" white bread, potatoes, tea, sugar and other commodities which would have been luxuries beyond the reach of parallel classes in earlier ages.[2]

THE TRUTH IS that the 19th century *inherited* conditions which reformers blamed on the age itself. For the bulk of the population, life in 18th-century Britain had been cruel, crude, and dismal. Most of "the common people" must have suffered from severe malnutrition resulting in proneness to disease and low life-expectation.

But, from about 1790, the great inventions were beginning to *multiply* supplies of "wage goods" in Britain. Apart from the output of machinery, the sort of things produced in "those dark satanic mills" were, on the whole, such as would have been consumed by the masses, not the upper classes. Influential writers like A. Nussbaum apparently think, said Ashton, that

> Arkwright and his fellows were making fine muslins and cambrics for royal courts and not calicos for English workers and the peasants of India.

The factories introduced mass production *for* the masses. And when the outputs were exported, did they bring merely luxuries in exchange?

The survival of mercantilism in the form of protective tariffs, the Corn Laws and other restraints must have strained off much, but certainly not all, of the benefit. The tax on bricks and tiles gravely braked progress in housing and sanitation. But even so, after the Napoleonic wars (*i.e.* during the period 1817–49), as H. A. Shannon pointed out, the output of bricks was "increasing faster than population by about one-third" while "housing of the population forms the greatest demand for bricks."[3] And did not the poor gain from the cheapening of clothing? And what about boots substituting for clogs, and hats for shawls, as well as new commodities like pocket handkerchiefs and clocks? And what about private schools, charity schools, hospitals, dispensaries, orphanages, churches, chapels, workmen's institutes, ale houses, newspapers, savings banks and insurance companies, which began to spread and flourish?[4]

And what about the output of the schools—literacy? Before the Industrial Revolution illiteracy had been normal for the working classes.

[1] F. A. Hayek (ed.), *Capitalism and the Historians*, pp. 40–41.

[2] See the testimony of one Thomas Holmes, quoted by Ashton, in *Capitalism and the Historians*, p. 158, note 26.

[3] H. A. Shannon, *Bricks—A Trade Index*, in *Economica* (1934). p. 311.

[4] See M. Buer, *Health Wealth and Population in the Early days of the Industrial Revolution* (1926), p. 43.

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Yet before the introduction of free and compulsory schooling, as E. G. West has shown, general literacy had been achieved.[5] And what about the new interclass mobility created? "Never were the barriers so down," wrote Mabel Buer.[6] Do not all these things indicate an unchallengeable improvement of condition? And how could it all have come about except through the system which Inglis condemns and "the Optimists" praised?

It seems to be sheer perversity that leads people like Inglis to deny the general sharing of this progress among all classes.

Moreover, yields to urban employments were sufficient to overcome the inertias of agricultural workers, notoriously slow to abandon age-old ways. No poll-tax was necessary to *drive* workers into the urban areas from agricultural employments and into the factories in the districts in which they could be economically provided.

One reason why the undoubted benefits for the working classes of the emergent industrial era are obscured is, I think, because the consequences largely took the form of a bigger proportion of the population finding employment in higher-paid *kinds* of work, leaving a smaller proportion in the lower-paid kinds. The rising trend of rates of real remuneration for different grades of skill which Bowley and Wood recorded do not constitute the whole story.

AS FOR INGLIS'S ATTACK on my own youthful contribution, I must at once say that when I wrote it I did not regard myself as an economic historian. Nor have I subsequently become one. But I did read the primary sources on the subject and I was shocked at what seemed to me to be gross misrepresentations by the Hammonds and others whose works I had originally read with respect. When I submitted my article I was confident enough of my thesis. But I expected my exposition to have defects; and I expected hostile criticism.

I was puzzled that neither the Hammonds (to whom I sent a reprint, which I remember was not even acknowledged) nor Hutchins and Harrison (also criticised) deigned to reply, even privately. Inglis quotes approvingly E. P. Thompson's assertion that "the Hammonds . . . turned too often towards their critics a genteel cheek of silence, and after that they were dead." I am now certain that the Hammonds did not reply to me because they *had* no reply to my specific charges.

Inglis makes play of my exposure of the Hammonds' account of the evidence of one Dr Hulme. In doing so, he skilfully misrepresents Hulme's evidence, just as the Hammonds had done. He does not tell his readers that Hulme's phrase which he quotes was *a reply in the course of cross-examination.* That doctor's point, as *I* made quite clear, was that he could not give worthwhile (*i.e.* scientific) opinions on the topic under discussion, which were not based on observation. The health of the factory children working for so many hours under the prevailing conditions was a question of fact to be determined by examination of the children. In Serjeant Pell's attempt to ridicule this expert evidence, Hulme was asked: "You, as a medical man, can form no opinion independent of evidence, as to the number of hours that children . . . etc.,?" He replied, "I can't." Asked, then, rhetorically and ironically, about a twenty-three hour working-day, he stuck to his point. "If there were such an extravagant thing to take place . . .," he said, the effect on health would still be a question of fact, *i.e.* of observation. "What sort of doctor would resort to such an evasion?", asks Inglis. It was *not* an "evasion." And Hulme did *not* "swear . . . that it was doubtful whether it would hurt [children] to work 23 hours of the 24," as the Hammonds reported. Moreover, this easily misrepresentable answer was that of *one* doctor. The Hammonds wrote that "doctors" were prepared so to swear.

Inglis ought, I suggest, to have given some indication of the context of my criticism of the Hammonds' reporting of Hulme's testimony. I had pointed out that the majority of the doctors who had testified before an earlier Committee (in 1816) knew nothing about factories except by hearsay. They had been, I said, "questioned in the following style: 'Supposing that children at an early age . . .'."

On the question of the 1833 Commission, after suggesting that, because the Commissioners were all eminent Ricardians they were committed to certain conclusions in advance of hearing the evidence, Inglis says that they found nevertheless that there *had* been "systematic" cruelty to the children and that they emphasised that it had been "systematic," whereas I had written that the Commission found those charges "to have been entirely without foundation." Unfortun-

[5] E. G. West, *Education and the State*, Chs. IX–XII. In spite of a vicious tax on paper intended to discourage literacy, the free-market sector (with some assistance from private charity) had managed to provide low-cost schooling (often in a distressingly poor environment), and by the 1830s "between two-thirds and three-quarters of the people . . . were already literate." (E. G. West, "The Uneasy Case for State Education", *The New Individualist Review*, Winter, 1966, p. 48).

[6] M. Buer, *Health, Wealth and Population in the Early Days of the Industrial Revolution*, p. 39. See also L. C. A. Knowles, *The Industrial and Commercial Revolutions* (1926), pp. 98–100.

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ately, I gave no page reference to the Commission's reports, but neither does my critic. I did say, however, that in 1837 Wing had argued (just as Inglis does now) that the Commission's reports "abundantly confirmed the evidence given before Sadler's Committee," and I would have carefully weighed up this claim before stating the opposite. There was *testimony* in the reports of alleged cruelties (but certainly not "systematic") *on the part of parents* (under whose control the factory children typically were); and I mentioned that. But I can remember no evidence of cruelties on the part of managements,[7] although undoubtedly factory discipline (like school discipline) must have been harsh in those days. Of course, it might be said that factory work for children was necessarily, in itself, "systematically cruel." But before emergent capitalism had provided the wage-goods which made childhood leisure a parental preference for the very first time in history can it *really* be seen in such terms?

Inglis claims further that the *evidence* before the 1832 Committee and the 1833 Commission "is virtually interchangeable." If that had been so, isn't it astonishing that one of the fiercest critics of the former (R. H. Greg) could refer to the evidence presented to the latter as "an authenticated mass of evidence to which all must bow"? But this is simply a question of fact with which I cannot deal convincingly without access to the reports. Admittedly much of the evidence given to the Committee was repeated before the Commission. But as I remember it, the balance was completely different. The snag is, however, as I wrote, that

> there is so voluminous a mass of material from the various Commissions and Committees that it would be possible to make out a case for almost any contention by a judicious selection of passages. . . .

Nevertheless, had I been writing a decade later, I should have given a rather different slant to my conclusions. In 1925 I had just read J. S. Mill's *On Liberty*, and I had been tremendously impressed by his insistence that government coercion could never be justified on the grounds that it changed an individual's preference or conduct *for his own good*. And in my article I pointed to "the salient fact" that, "in so far as the work-people then had a 'choice of alternative benefits', they chose the conditions which the reformers condemned." And "the human emotions from which parental affections spring were no different then," I wrote, "from what they are today;" yet parents brought their children with them into the factories for what they thought was for their children's good.

INGLIS IS PROBABLY wrong in his assertion that "in the early part of the nineteenth century, child labour came to be used on a scale it had never been used before." My own impression is that it had been more or less universal in the labouring and artisan classes in one form or other since time immemorial. Defoe casually praised the town of Norwich early in the eighteenth century for its industriousness and because "the very children after four or five years of age could every one earn their own bread."[8] Crompton (whose "mule" invention of 1775 revolutionised the cotton industry) recollected that he was employed in manufacture soon after he was able to walk.[9] But whereas in pre-factory days children had been "set to work as soon as they could crawl," by 1816, "very few children under ten seem to have been employed in the factories investigated." Things were clearly improving. However, child labour had never been so highly paid in real terms as it was after the steam factories got going. Hence it *could* well be that increased parental incentives to employ their children for the contribution their offspring could make to family well-being actually did create the circumstances to which Inglis refers. But this was not the impression I got when I studied this question with some care.

One very important point which appears never to be made, although it is obvious enough, concerns the question of exactly *where*, if child labour *was* blameworthy, the blame should have been laid. In every case the blame (if any) rested on the parents alone. The consumers of the children's contribution to output could plead innocent as could the intermediaries between consumers and workers. *I.e.*, the "*entrepreneurs*" (those who took the risks of providing the tools of production—factory building, machines, etc—and of financing the acquisition of materials and the purchase of labour for investment in work in progress) were blameless. They had no way of *compelling* parents to offer the children's services, under conditions with which the parents were fully conversant. Of course, having once invested in industries in which children were a source of labour, the factory owners acquired a vested interest in the continued availability of that labour; for the forecasts of profitability which had induced them to take the investment risks would be upset through any legislative overruling of parental wishes (namely, that their children should be allowed to earn).

[7] I refer here solely to the reports of the 1833 Commission.

[8] D. Defoe, *Tours Through England and Wales* (ed. G. D. H. Cole, 1928), Vol. I, p. 62.

[9] Knowles, *Industrial and Commercial Revolutions*, p. 91.

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IT IS THE PROCESS of "writing history backwards" which is partly to blame for the uncritical condemnation of the early factory system. I agree with Ashton that one of the greatest accomplishments of emergent industrial capitalism was the humanitarian spirit which it engendered. But for some puzzling reason opinion-makers have been led to traduce the agency which brought that spirit into being.

This prompts me to refer to Ure who was, I think, quite justified in the passage Inglis quotes to ridicule his (Ure's) defence of factory conditions. For the factories of the early 19th century must have been less unhealthy than the workshops of the domestic system (often garrets), less unhealthy than most contemporary homes, and less unhealthy even than most of the schools in the poorer districts.[10] And it *was* the hated machine which was tending persistently to improve both working and domestic environments in each successive decade. What Ure termed the "benignant power of steam" was truly eliminating the need for many forms of human drudgery and eventually the need (from the parental standpoint) for child labour. Although a special pleader, Ure is a more trustworthy authority on the factories of his era than Byron, Carlyle, *et al.* whose judgment Inglis prefers to accept.

As I pointed out, the contemporary critics of the factories made no attempt to compare the condition of the children employed in them with that of children in other sections of the community. Nor do modern critics refer to the lot of the 40,000 children driven from employment by the 1834 Act. This Act simply forced large numbers of children on to the streets[11] or into more arduous work under more unhealthy conditions—in the fields, in the mines, in domestic manufacture (which was eliminated only very slowly) or in the uncontrolled factories (like dyeing, bleaching, etc.).[12] Emergent industrial capitalism was in process of gradually providing humane alternatives to employment for the children of factory communities. But even as late as 1866 child labour remained important in the less prosperous occupations. How much more harmful therefore must have been the precipitate legislation of 1834 which struck mainly at the relatively profitable activities that were thought able to shoulder the burden.

INGLIS SUGGESTS that Sir George Cornewall Lewis's impressive testimony about the essential humanity of the child labour age—especially the official attitude towards the poor—has to be rejected (or at least discounted) simply because he had accepted an appointment as a Poor Law Commissioner; and he reprimands Henderson and Chaloner because they failed to disclose the damning fact that *he* was the author of the anonymous *Edinburgh Review* article (from which they quote) in which he had defended the era. But for anyone who knows Lewis's writings, Inglis's disclosure adds to the authority which must attach to the article in question. Lewis was a man of unchallengeable humanity, a scholar of impressive learning and integrity, a fine statesman, and (in the words of his biographer, Bagehot) "incapable of artificial belief".[13] It is typical of Inglis's methods that he denigrates Lewis's testimony solely on the grounds that he happened to have accepted appointment to a Commission which Friedrich Engels had attacked.

With stunning rhetorical effect, Inglis ends his polemic by referring to the case of children awakened at four-thirty in the morning to begin work at five a.m. and to continue until nine o'clock in the evening and for six days a week. Just how pathetic their lot was, few readers will at first perceive. These poor children would work for sixteen hours a day and, on the assumption that they would require sleep for at least seven hours, would have no time for breakfast in the morning or supper at night. Yet (the reader may feel) that almost unbelievably cruel era—"the result of free competition"—is actually applauded by "the new economic historians." What brutes they must be! Or if not brutes, what blinded doctrinaires they must be—incapable of perceiving the degradation caused by a system they feel compelled to defend on *a priori* grounds.

The truth is that, to the extent to which the institutions of early industrial capitalism permitted "free competition", they were, for the first time in the history of mankind, *eliminating* the necessity for children to "earn their own bread" and the need for burdensome toil generally. The machine age under competitive capitalism did not *create* juvenile or adult drudgery—it *eradicated* it.

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[10] See *Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Laboring Classes* (1844), quoted in Knowles' *Industrial and Commercial Revolutions*, p. 95.

[11] "Charity schools" were not available for the majority and parents' ability to pay for private schooling had been materially reduced.

[12] The Report of the Factories Commission of 1833 remarked that ". . . of all the employments to which children are subjected those carried on in the factories are among the least laborious . . . and the least unwholesome." In many cases, said the report, children employed in the home had to work "at an earlier age for longer hours and for less wages than the children employed in factories." Quoted in Knowles, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

[13] Walter Bagehot, *Biographical Studies* (1880), p. 243. This obituary was written in 1863. It ends: ". . . when few public men are trusted—when wisdom, always rare, is rarer even than usual—many may ask, in no long time, 'Where is Lewis now?' "

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Writing in the early years of the eighteenth century, Defoe remarked of the densely populated town of Norwich that, on working days, it seemed like a "town without inhabitants"—for the inhabitants

> being all busy at their manufactures, dwell in their garrets at their looms and in their combing houses. . . . all the work they are employed in being done within doors.

Defoe obviously expected his readers at that time to praise, not to condemn, such industriousness. Popular opinion began to regard labour from sunrise to sunset (or longer) as an evil only *after* the great inventions, together with the competitive process, had brought about a new valuation of leisure.

But how is *competition* supposed to cause the social degradation and suffering which Toynbee, the Webbs, the Hammonds, the Coles, Nussbaum, Inglis and others maintain was its consequence? "Competition" is best defined as the substitution of the least-cost method of producing and marketing any product (or of achieving any other objective).[14] Such a process can only *serve* human preferences, permitting each individual chosen end to be pursued up to the point at which—through the cost factor—other ends become preferred. The process does not determine or even directly influence those preferences. Legislation which suppresses parents' preferences for pecuniary income *from* their children rather than leisure *for* their children (like moral teaching which persuades people not to smoke, or drink alcohol) does not *over-rule* competition. It causes different preferences to be expressed.

I explained above that the apparently universal preference of parents before the 1834 Act that their children should be allowed to work had created a vested interest on the part of *entrepreneurs* in the continued free expression of that preference; for the latter had invested in the expectation of being able to purchase the children's inputs. That the *entrepreneurs'* fortunes would be adversely affected by that Act was no valid argument against it (even though some form of compensation might have been just). But they can no more be blamed for parental insistence on child labour than coffee-producers could be blamed if it were suddenly discovered that drinking coffee was conducive to heart complaints.

The argument may be expected that "the employers" *were* nevertheless to blame; for through "exploitation" of adult labour (paying low wages) the factory-owners left parents with no option but to force their children to work in order to survive. But this would be to place the blame on what economists to day call "monopsony" (or "oligopsony");[15] not on "competition." And if there *is* anything in that sort of argument, it carries the implication that restraints on juvenile employment, as under the 1834 Act, without concomitant legislation to dissolve monopsonistic exploitation, must have gravely reduced real family incomes. In the event, the indications are that competition for labour was effective. Ashton *did* unearth evidence that secret collusive agreements in respect of labour's remuneration existed during the Industrial Revolution. But monopsonistic collusion without "lock-in" arrangements confers no power to exploit, and there are no indications that such arrangements occurred in the early 1800s.

THE FORM OF COMPETITION which has aroused the most censorious denunciations is that expressed through the substitution of labour-economising assets for labour. Now, ever since the invention of the wheel and the lever, human ingenuity has been devising methods under which given outputs can be produced with fewer workers—or a smaller quantity of materials—or a reduced real value of assets. In every such instance, the process has been releasing labour, materials, and assets for use in producing *additional outputs—i.e.*, goods and services which were not previously available for mankind. This "economising-displacement process", as I like to call it, has constituted the vital dynamic factor in humanity's progress in material well-being. Every cheapening of one input or output has been contributing to the source of demands for all non-competing inputs or outputs, so that throughout history such economies have been raising the real value of employment outlets generally. Innovations which reduce the demand for labour in a particular activity are wage-multiplying in their effect upon the remuneration of labour in the aggregate.

What has caused widespread misapprehensions, of which Inglis's article may be a manifestation, is that competition—unless it can be suppressed—severely punishes those who seek to frustrate its power. The miseries of the handloom-weavers are the classic example. But friends of the poor, and especially those "friends" who have sought pecuniary gain or power *via* political support from the poor, have all too often regarded the "punishments"—the social discipline of the market—as an evil, and have encouraged the workers to *resist* the wage-multiplying process.

[14] Whatever institutional framework may be necessary to ensure the *ability* to make the required substitutions and to ensure effective *incentives* to do so.

[15] "Monopsony" refers to monopolistic purchasing; "oligopsony" refers to tacit monopsony.

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IN CONCLUSION, I REPEAT that it was emergent industrial capitalism which, in the sectors in which mercantilist restraints had not survived, multiplied the yield to effort during the period we have been discussing. In doing so, machine power not only elevated the material well-being of the people but increased individual freedom. It greatly reduced the need for human drudgery. It made possible the abandonment of child labour which had been accepted as essential (without question from any quarter) throughout the pre-capitalist period. Above all, it was the ultimate source of a new humanitarian spirit with political appeals (not always disinterested) to the hearts of the voters. It *was* in many ways an ugly age, but its ugliness differed from that of earlier ages. Former rural areas (often formerly beautiful areas) became dreary, sooty towns with long rows of small, monotonously designed, working-class dwellings, and "satanic" factories which belched forth steam, smoke, and worse. But these dismal developments must be judged as an inevitable stage in the achievement of a diffused relative affluence for the masses.

Unfortunately, as Oscar Wilde somewhere remarked, it is far easier to be sympathetic to suffering than it is to be sympathetic to thought. I hope this explains writers like Brian Inglis. And I hope W. S. Gilbert's lines from *Princess Ida* do not apply:

If you give me your attention, I will tell you what I am.
I'm a genuine philanthropist. All other kinds are sham.

Coming Back

Hurrying—hanging back—along the street.
Light from the house lost in the yellow glare.
Light in the hall. A hand on the cold rail:
The palm tense. Silence on every stair.

Smiling faces in frames—taut and still.
A sigh begins to tremble in the air.
The air flies past. Black through an open door:
The silence of sleep!—and her dark head lying there.

Derwent May

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LETTERS

Aftermath of Empire

IN HIS ARTICLE about India (ENCOUNTER, June 1972) Mr John Grigg obviously represents the prevailing British mood, full of compunctions and regretful hindsights to which the European man has always been prone. But in his effort to set the record straight and absolve old guilts by apportioning new blame, Mr Grigg has botched the article.

Whatever the new realities behind the Kashmir dispute, the author's assertion that the issue can be stated "in a single sentence: Kashmir is legally part of the Indian Union and the Indian Union deserves to survive—as did the American Union in Abraham Lincoln's day" is preposterous. According to Mr Grigg himself: "The agreed procedure for deciding the future of the Princely States, under which Kashmir became a part of India, was flouted by India in the (relatively trivial) case of Junagadh". First of all, it is incorrect, if not downright cruel, to equate poor Kashmiris and their unenviable social and political position to that of the American South in Abraham Lincoln's day. Lincoln's action against the South was an issue of great moral import for all nations; the Kashmir dispute has a UN record that leaves the whole matter morally unresolved. The legalism of Kashmir being a part of India derives from a principle which, according to the author, becomes "relatively trivial" when India flouts it. Principles are never relative, specially when they are used to formulate a legalism.

I suspect the author is familiar with facts but has given his article a simplistic bias because of his enthusiasm about India. This enthusiasm in itself may not be reprehensible but the article it has prompted suffers from flaws that even the Indian Information Ministry has learned to avoid. According to the author, the genesis of Pakistan was the result of "fear and bigotry in the Indian Muslim community"; yet Jinnah was "worldly and free-thinking". It is needless to point out to a historian that Pakistan became inevitable because there was a solid communalist lobby inside the Congress. Gandhi, vatic and incoherent, was exploited and manoeuvred by this lobby (and the British administration); Nehru, socialist and secular, never enjoyed any real power of decision during this time to the extent of affecting the communalist feeling inside Congress.

I am sure one can be enthusiastic about India and ignore the Kashmiris without a historical contortionist's act and without formulating legalisms, particularly now that India is in her first mood of triumph. But it would be wrong, in this moment of India's triumph (and moments of triumph are morally always the weakest), to thrust upon her a role that South Asia is not prepared to accept. There are already too many Big-Power doctrines being bandied about in this area of potential danger.

AL-HAJ BAGH ALI

Moscow

WHEN I DESCRIBED Junagadh as a "relatively trivial" case I was referring only to its minuscule size and importance as a place, compared with Kashmir. Nobody who read my article could suppose that I was excusing India's violation of principle in that case: indeed, I was explicitly regretting it.

The principle itself seems to me crucially valid, and is definitely the same principle that Lincoln fought for —the integrity of a federal union with democratic institutions.

Mr Al-Haj Bagh Ali's apparent view that Pakistan "became inevitable because there was a solid communalist lobby inside the Congress" which Nehru was powerless to control, and that Muslim fear and bigotry ruthlessly exploited by Jinnah had nothing whatever to do with it, will not, I believe, be supported by objective historians.

Finally, why should moments of triumph be regarded as "morally always the weakest"? Is it virtuous to be beaten, and sinful to win, whatever the merits of a dispute? Surely it is morally OK to be triumphant in a just cause, and then to show magnanimity in victory—as Mrs Gandhi showed at Simla?

JOHN GRIGG

London

Skidelsky & Historical Truth

IN YOUR distinguished July issue, Robert Skidelsky's essay has been wrongly assigned to "History and Politics." It seems to me that it belongs instead to the section on Bombsters.

The chief premise of Skidelsky's criticism of recent histories of the 1930s is that the history a man writes is as good or as bad as his motives. Skidelsky declares this to be the only proper way to assess a historian's work because history has "everything to do with the selection and arrangement" of facts, "which always reflect shifting needs and changing outlooks." It is therefore "vulgar", according to Skidelsky, to talk about "facts" in history. It is more appropriate to disclose, as he does, that offending historians are engaged in the "rehabilitation" of the "*Guilty Men* of inter-war Conservatism", or purveying a "new revisionism", that members of the "appeasement party" are engaged in "basically a conservative undertaking" designed to save face for the ruling class of England and to bolster the foreign policy of the U.S.A.

The motives of these historians may be as base as Skidelsky supposes, or they may be quite different or even entirely pure. Nothing follows about the falsity or truth of what they say. If we believe a man to be a liar, we may and should scrutinise his assertions. But we cannot know his motives from his assertions, and not even a life-long intimacy makes it easy to know a man's motives. On the other hand, revealing truths have indeed come from men who may have been dishonest, vain, obsessed, or mad.

Though truth in history is not certain and unchanging, any more than in science, it does not depend on *why* the historian wrote but on whether he has considered the available evidence in accordance with the canons of historical practice and on whether he offers

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a coherent and plausible interpretation. A proper criticism of his history—as opposed to an analysis of his character—must point to counter-evidence or show why his conclusions are unacceptable.

SKIDELSKY'S OWN ESSAY shows scant respect for the standards of historical discourse or of general intellectual discussion. He tells us that historians are "normally" expected to produce "new" truths, though he does not tell us—apart, evidently, from himself—who expects this. But he then goes on to argue that many historians who have stated "new" truths about the Second World War are for that very reason suspect. Although he praises A. J. P. Taylor's history as an example of "revisionism", he condemns H. R. Trevor-Roper's "orthodox" criticism of Taylor (in ENCOUNTER) as highly profitable—though the proceeds from an article in ENCOUNTER are not exactly notorious for exceeding those from a popular book. Having divided histories into "orthodox" and "revisionist" (the latter label having started its career as a way of castigating factions in revolutionary movements and Communist countries), having approved of Taylor's "revisionist" history and also declared "revisionism" characteristic of every "dynamic" society, Skidelsky goes on both to deplore the fact that Britain has had no new ideas since World War II, and to condemn the "new revisionism" that has lately appeared in Britain. Because these recent histories have used "official" papers, Skidelsky tells us that they are necessarily "official" and "conservative." He does not cite other evidence, but bases his arguments against "conservative" history on entities such as "the *status quo*", "conditions" that "are clearly revealed", "the central fact which emerges from four hundred years of European history", "the general trend of the 1930s", the "active elements in conventional British politics", and Germany's "weight in the world".

Whatever the practical effect of so-called "conservative" history on British or American morale, the intellectual implication of Skidelsky's manner of discussing history is that all apparently rational discourse is really an instrument of practical action. In saying that

In the Margin . . . Habe—Dürrenmatt

Zurich

IN *the June* ENCOUNTER *our columnist* R *left our readers with a cliffhanger. Hans Habe had sued Friedrich Dürrenmatt for libel in a Swiss court; and not only was it a curious case of very Continental, very non-English notions of how law can operate in questions of honour and slander, but (as someone said of the lined face of a harassed refugee from Hitler's Vienna) the whole map of Central Europe was there. Could an anti-Nazi writer like Hans Habe be called "a Fascist?" Couldn't an impassioned polemicist of the liberal-Left like Dürrenmatt be free to write as he pleased in an argument which involved so many chequered European careers? And what of Harry Buckwitz, the silent* Mittelpunkt *of the whole storm, the famous Frankfurt theatre producer (what a courageous defence of Brechtian staging he had put up in Western Germany!) now en route to Switzerland to take over the Zurich* Schauspielhaus, *who had been attacked by Habe and defended by Dürrenmatt?*

Well, since R *reported on this extraordinary drama, the Zurich court rang down the curtain. The decision was full of special legalistic lore, technical distinctions between* Beschimpfung *(insult) and* üble Nachrede *(slander), and a not unknowing literary touch—*

> *. . . honour is an essence that's not seen;*
> *They have it very oft that have it not . . .*
> *(Iago, in* OTHELLO *Act IV, scene 1, 17–18)*

Or, as the Zurich judge in this Ehrverletzungsprozess *put it in impeccable Schlegel/Tieck:* "Die Ehr ist ein unsichtbares Wesen, und oft besitzt sie der, der sie nicht hat. . . ." *The final result—and all followers of* R *should know it—was a legal victory for Habe. The court, with a fine financial feeling for the Swiss relation between honour and money, awarded him all of one hundred francs (eleven pounds; or twenty-six dollars; or eight hundred drachmas.) It added to it an award of legal costs in the amount of 3000 Swiss francs.*

THREE PROSY SENTENCES *out of a violent intellectual polemic between a Swiss playwright and a Hungarian-born American, who writes novels in Salzburg and a weekly column in Hamburg's* Die Welt, *were put under the microscope. Only one sentence was considered to be suspect. The two "innocent" ones, or at least remarks which were not legally punishable, were these;*

> *"One simply doesn't step into excrement, animal or human, that one sees in the street. . . ."*
> *"The only Fascist in this whole affair is Habe. . . ."*

As ENCOUNTER *readers will recall, the "whole affair" had to do with Harry Buckwitz's political career, certain unknown details of which Hans Habe had revealed. Namely, that he had begged to return to the Third Reich during World War II, that he had served (as a hotel director in Lodz) in Hitler-occupied Poland in 1943–4, that he had written (at least it was published under his name) a fulsome account of the joy of a German refugee on re-discovering the homeland and the true Teutonic cause. ("I am a German and therefore a National Socialist.") Inasmuch as, after the War, the true cause for Buckwitz involved nothing but the purest Brechtian ideals of authentic theatre and social revolution, there was a bit of contradictory double-talk there; and Habe made the most of it. Aha! The man of the Left was really a Fascist. Here is the "Left Fascism" of our day!*

Students of ideology will recognise the problem. Had Buckwitz been a man of the liberal-centre or the conservative-right such an exposure would have

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historical ideas are reflections of "changing needs", Skidelsky makes the *truthfulness* of history identical with its *usefulness* for satisfying practical wants. Thus Skidelsky reduces the writing of history to assertions and counter-assertions supporting some set of interests or policies; in other words, to that which constitutes "history" in totalitarian countries where only martyrs commit themselves to disregarding political requirements in their intellectual work.

BUT HISTORIANS WHO HAVE a regard for the truthfulness, as opposed to the usefulness, of assertions distinguish between *intellectual* activities such as *history* and *practical* activities such as *politics*. They do not rewrite history to serve new political purposes. They rewrite history because no historian can have seized the "whole" truth, and so modifications or alternatives are constantly being proposed. This is what Goethe meant by the words Skidelsky quotes but completely misunderstands.

Why a historian comes to write his history, or how politicians may use what he writes, is entirely irrelevant to the truth of what he says. Anyone who denies that history can be distinguished from the satisfaction of wants, whether psychological or political, is, in my view, attacking one of the foundations of civilisation.

SHIRLEY ROBIN LETWIN

London

MRS SHIRLEY ROBIN LETWIN'S letter rests upon a simple confusion. I was merely making the point that the writing of history, like any other kind of social activity, reflects the interests, problems and concerns of the society in which it takes place. This has nothing to do with a historian's personal motives. To confuse the two, as Mrs. Letwin appears to do, is to misunderstand the argument.

If this point be conceded, it is as legitimate to discuss the social and political origins of any school of historical interpretation as it is to discuss the social and political origins of any other social activity. I cannot in all modesty see that by doing so I am undermining the foundations of civilisation.

ROBERT SKIDELSKY

London

Cliffhanger

been the End. As a man of the Left, there was comradely solidarity right down the line. Dürrenmatt was only one of a small brave army that defended Buckwitz (for Brechtian valour in the face of the bourgeois enemy) and attacked Habe (obviously the real *fascist in the whole affair for bringing up such excremental details). At any rate, Buckwitz remained silent, served no writs, held his peace. Habe polemicised. Dürrenmatt counter-attacked. The Zurich court, uneasy with matters that had to do with Budapest, Vienna, Hamburg, Frankfurt, and other miserable centres of European tragedy, tried to pick its way through the ethico-legalistic thicket.*

ONE SENTENCE *could not be evaded. Dürrenmatt had written in the Swiss* Sontags Journal *that "even if it's all true about what Buckwitz is supposed to have written at the time, Habe is still today worse* (schlimmer) *than Buckwitz then. . . ." This troubled the Zurich judge. After all, Habe was a Hungarian Jew, who had fled to the USA, returned to Europe in 1944 as an American army officer. Buckwitz was a German, who returned to Hitler's* Reich, *served in Lodz (where every last Jewish family had been eliminated), and had never said a word about all this when he turned up as a Brechtian anti-Nazi post-War culture-hero. Who was worse than whom? Surely there was a bit of injustice here, a few francs worth at the very least. Perhaps it wasn't quite* üble Nachrede *(slander), then what about* Beschimpfung *(insult)? Thus it was that the Hundred-Franc decision was made, the sharpest arrow shot since Wilhelm Tell and the apple, the most Swiss squeak since the cuckoo clock.*

The readers of R *now know how the cliff-hanger ended.*

M.J.L.

Cranston's Semantics

IN HIS ESSAY, "Ethics and Politics", in the June ENCOUNTER, Maurice Cranston took aim at a number of deserving targets. But why did he attack the concept of "equality of opportunity"? When he labels it "fanciful," and an expression of "euphoria," he implies that it is an ideal too far from the reality of human social behaviour to be taken seriously. Since his essay is otherwise an attempt to defend the normative approach to politics, Cranston obviously doesn't really believe that unreachable ideals are irrelevant.

He complains that such terms are used opportunistically and inexactly in political rhetoric, which can also be said of his own categories of values: duty, prudence, and public advantage. But their misuse says nothing about the importance or utility of the values themselves as standards against which a society, with or without the aid of its philosophers, evaluates its own performance.

His main criticism of the term, that the words "equality" and "opportunity" used together is a logical contradiction, sounds like a college debater's point. Cranston professes to be unclear about what the term means. It is not at all difficult. A public commitment to equality of opportunity means simply that the governmental powers should strive to eliminate or reduce any advantage that one citizen or group has over another unless that advantage is based on differences of innate genetic potential decreed by nature. Many would add that no member of society should be allowed to suffer from deprivation regardless of innate differences, but that is a separate value.

In any case, such factors as racial prejudice or religion should not work to the advantage or disadvantage of anyone. One does not have to be an American black, or an Ulster Catholic, to know that equality of opportunity is frequently denied, and that to do better is a perfectly legitimate and pragmatic expectation of public policy. The political Left and

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Right, in this case, tend to disagree over means not ends.

In the realm of athletics the ideal of equality of opportunity is usually achieved in reality with the aid of an authoritarian structure of rules and officials. Runners must start at exactly the same time and run exactly the same distance. A tennis court has precisely the same measurements on both sides of the net, rules apply equally to all, rackets are similar, and the players trade sides periodically as an added means of holding the environmental factor constant. After a series of contests the distribution of awards among athletes is likely to correlate very closely with the distribution of native potential among them. Fair play is the rule.

In a democratic polity such an objective seems always beyond contemporary reach. We, the players, prudently insist on the right to choose and remove the referees; we refuse to entrust them with absolute power of decision; and the players and referees alike have the power to change the rules of the game as the game goes on. Ever present is the danger that a majority will slant the rules in its own favour at the expense of a minority. Moral absolutes such as "equality of opportunity" help to inhibit majorities from abusing their powers.

If there is a better term, let's have it, but quibbling over semantics is not very helpful.

CEDRIC W. TARR, JR.

University of Wisconsin

I AM GRATEFUL to Professor Cedric Tarr for his friendly criticism. I agree that the phrase "equality of opportunity" is sometimes used to refer to wholly intelligible policies such as *"la carrière ouverte aux talents."* I would also agree that such policies are more just and more efficacious than the kind of hereditary privilege which they have usually replaced. But such policies are not to be defended by an appeal to "equality", for they put a new *élite* in the place of the old. They simply provide fair access to opportunity. That is their nature, and that is their virtue.

Professor Tarr reminds me of a New England industrialist I know, who has started to advertise himself as an "equal opportunity employer." When I asked my friend what this boast signified, he explained that whereas he used in the past to recruit workers solely on the basis of superior skill, he now reserved at least 20 per cent of the openings for coloured workers, whether or not they were the most skilled applicants for the job. I pointed out to him that far from having become an "equal opportunity employer" if the phrase means anything at all, that was precisely the thing he had now ceased to be: for he had abandoned the policy of judging by skill alone and started discriminating on ethnic or "racial" grounds in choosing his employees.

There is doubtless a lot to be said for giving privileges to people previously ill-treated, and for trying to iron out some of the more gross inequalities in American society. But this would be a programme directed towards *equality* and not "equality of opportunity."

MAURICE CRANSTON

London School of Economics

The Danger of Editors

IN his sharply-observed article on "Auden Europeanised" (ENCOUNTER, May), Mr Peter Sharratt takes Europe's editors to task and cries out for a proper manifesto against their misdemeanours.

It has already been done, and I can only hope that with the increased presence of English culture and language in the new Europe there will be a wider readership for William Hazlitt (1778–1830), among whose brilliant and unforgettable essays there is one called "A Chapter on Editors."

> Editors are a "sort of *tittle-tattle*"—difficult to deal with, dangerous to discuss. They in general partake of the usual infirmity of human nature, and of persons placed in high and honorary situations. Like other individuals raised to authority, they are chosen to fill a certain post for qualities useful or ornamental to the *reading public*; but they soon fancy that the situation has been invented for their own honour and profit, and sink the use in the abuse. Kings are not the only servants of the public who imagine that they are the *state*. Editors are but men, and easily "lay the flattering unction to their souls" that they are the Magazine, the Newspaper, or the Review they conduct.

Surely none of this is too strong when one considers the spectacle of certain editors and publishers in Fleet Street, on the Left Bank of the Seine or the Right Bank of the Spree, or indeed on the island of Manhattan.

> They cannot write a whole work themselves, but they take care that the whole is such as they might have written. . . . If an article has nothing to recommend it, is one of no mark or likelihood, it goes in; there is no offence in it. If it is likely to strike, to draw attention, to make a noise, then every syllable is scanned, every objection is weighed: if grave, it is too grave; if witty, it is too witty. . . . There is no unexpected relief, no unwelcome inequality of style, to disorder the nerves, or perplex the understanding: the reader may read, and smile, without meeting a single idea to break his repose. . . .
>
> Some Editors will let you praise nobody; others will let you blame nobody. The first excites their jealousy of contemporary merit: the last excites their fears, and they do not like to make enemies. . . .

I do not, of course, mean for any of Hazlitt's strictures which I have quoted* in this letter to the Editor of ENCOUNTER to apply to "present company", unless of course they happen to strike and wound—and then, I suspect, the matter will go unpublished. Even so the Editor might take comfort from Hazlitt's more constructive parting shot:

> An Editor should have no friends. . . . An Editor should, in one sense, be a respectable man—a distinguished character; otherwise he cannot lend his name and sanction to the work. The conductor of a periodical production which is to circulate widely and give the tone to taste and opinion, ought to be of high standing, should have connections with society, should belong to some literary institution, should be courted by the great, be run after by

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the obscure. . . . An Editor, then, should be an abstraction—a being in the clouds—a mind without a body—reason without passion. But where find such a one?

J. L. B. PHILLIPS

Oxford

* My quotations are from William Hazlitt's *Men and Manners: Sketches and Essays* (1852; repr. 1970), pp. 304–13.

Right or Wrong

LEON TROTSKY is quoted in your June issue (p. 28) as saying: "The English have a saying, 'My country, right or wrong'."

The English may have such a saying, but it originated with the American naval officer Stephen Decatur who, in 1816, proposed the following toast at a banquet: "Our country! in her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong!"

The saying has long been a pet of the patriots and the derision of intellectuals, but right or wrong, it is American.

RICHARD HANSER

NBC Television,
New York

"Arguing on the Box"

THE SO-CALLED TRANSCRIPT of the TV discussion between James Baldwin, Peregrine Worsthorne and Bryan Magee which you published in your September issue was an unrecognisable travesty of the programme as it appeared on the air. Any sentence, including this one, loses part of its sense if punctuation is put in the wrong places or omitted altogether. If, then, for some of the words you substitute others which sound similar but have different meanings—say "pulled" for "put" and "admitted" for "omitted"—you get gobbledygook.

If you do this throughout the whole of the text; and if you also print an occasional "ah" between the words, omit sizeable chunks of the discussion without any indication of where you have done so, shuffle the order of the parts that remain, and finally, just for good measure, attribute the odd speech to the wrong speaker, you have ENCOUNTER's six-and-a-half pages of risible nonsense. On the programme James Baldwin and Peregrine Worsthorne, though they both got angry, were coherent and forceful throughout, made telling points, developed clear lines of argument. Your transcript so obscures most of what they said as to give a ludicrously inaccurate impression of the programme as a whole and a grossly unfair one of its participants. Anyone comparing your version with the programme as transmitted might well be amazed at the extent of the misrepresentation.

In fact, every experienced broadcaster (and, one would have thought, every experienced journalist) is only too familiar with typescripts that have been made straight off a tape and read like that—and consequently with the hours of detailed editorial work needed to bring them up to a reasonable standard of accuracy. It is difficult to understand how any professional could fail to recognise one on sight. That ENCOUNTER should mistake one for "a reasonably accurate transcript" and publish it as such is a professional boob so rudimentary and crass as to be quite incredible.

In fact, ENCOUNTER seems to have boobed all along the line. Although copyright in the programme belongs to Thames Television, ENCOUNTER did not ask for and was not given permission to publish the transcript. (It would never have received permission, of course, for so corrupt a text.) ENCOUNTER did not even make contact with anyone connected with the *Something to Say* series at Thames Television to check the accuracy of what should have been seen at once as an inaccurate typescript: the first either the Producer or the Chairman of the programme knew of an intent to publish anything at all was seeing this garbled version of their work in print. Insult was added to injury by the wording of ENCOUNTER's introduction to this worthless document, holding its contents up to ridicule. Also, it was published to provide support for the article preceding it in which Peregrine Worsthorne argued that what intellectuals say in television talk programmes is usually of an abysmally low intellectual standard. Whether or not that is true (the critics almost unanimously declare it to be conspicuously untrue of *Something to Say)* such a hopelessly inaccurate transcript can give it no support, though it may seem to in the eyes of people who did not see the programme.

ENCOUNTER owes a double apology to the participants in the programme, one for publishing such a mangled version of what they said, the other for then holding this up to ridicule; and it owes an apology to Thames Television for a flagrant breach of copyright.

UDI EICHLER
BRYAN MAGEE

Thames Television,
London

1. MR BRYAN MAGEE, who chaired the programme in question, Mr Udi Eichler, who was the producer, and Messrs Peregrine Worsthorne and James Baldwin, who were the main debaters, are all honourable and serious men, and nothing that we published was intended to reflect on their qualities of coherent intelligence of which all readers of ENCOUNTER—and indeed all viewers of British public affairs television—will be aware. We can only hope that the various mispronunciations which even the most fluent of speakers commit—and the odd misprints which even the most diligent of typists and typesetters happen to make—gave no other impression. We are, for better or worse, not a magazine of satire, and ridicule is not our line.

2. An ENCOUNTER editor had seen the *Something to Say* programme, and thought it interesting and

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important enough to take up in the magazine. We asked Thames Television for a transcript and promptly received what we took to be a "reasonably accurate" version, a mimeographed manuscript (Number 9, VTR No. TH55856) of thirty-five pages, some twenty-three of which we considered to be of such documentary fascination—both for students of the Black-White dialogue, and for analysts of the impact of televised political debate—that we simply set it, as received, for publication (with, however, a clear statement that it was in fact "unedited"). We do not agree that careful editorial work, by editors who clean up and authors who rewrite, always produces a version which is faithful to the true spirit of an agitated, polemical exchange. Messrs Eichler and Magee write: "Any sentence, including this one, loses part of its sense if punctuation is put in the wrong places or omitted altogether." Neither their sentence, ah, nor—this sentence; loses (looses?) any part . . . of its . . . sense, if transcribed [interruption] erratically in this, ah, or any other conceivable way.

3. Mr Worsthorne, the author of the ENCOUNTER critique of television as a medium of serious political and intellectual communication, was himself one of the two main speakers on the *Something to Say* programme. He, presumably, heard what was said on that occasion; he also had an opportunity to read the version which a Thames Television transcriber, in admittedly somewhat garbled fashion, made from listening to the tapes. Mr Worsthorne was reinforced in his doubts. Was one really saying what one thought one was saying? And aren't the standards for judging the televised word significantly different from true coherence and precision in intellectual formulation? Listeners hear what they hear, and surely the Thames Television transcriber has equal aural rights with anybody. Messrs Eichler and Magee underestimate the stunning impact of their remarkable programme. Whether every word or phrase was correctly heard or properly understood—on the air or on the page—matters, it seems to us, very little in comparison to the serious issues which the angry, spluttering, at times incoherent, at times rhetorically eloquent, confrontation raised. They are, in brief, first: the Black-White misunderstanding, as an upper-class white Anglo-Saxon and a black Harlem militant talk completely (and revealingly) past each other; and, second, the post-McLuhan problem of "understanding mass media" which has occupied us in long, and, we hope, illuminating articles for years and years. (See especially: R. H. S. Crossman, "Thoughts of a Captive Viewer", ENCOUNTER, August 1962; Henry Fairlie, "The Idiot Box", March 1962; Jeremy Isaacs, "The Future of TV Journalism," March 1968; Robin Day, "Troubled Reflections of a TV Journalist", May 1970.)

4. Nevertheless, if we appeared to be holding up anybody to ridicule, if we infringed a copyright or seemed to be stealing words that had been publicly broadcast to millions, if any of our excerpts (which we had hoped clearly to have identified in the usual dot-dot-dot fashion) were "grossly unfair", if we were guilty of boobing and obscuring and misrepresenting and travestying, then we are truly sorry and tender our sincere apologies to all concerned.

M.J.L.

AUTHORS

Elie Kedourie is Professor of Politics in the University of London (London School of Economics) and Editor of *Middle Eastern Studies*. His books include *Nationalism* (Hutchinson, 1960), *The Chatham House Version*, and *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (Weidenfeld, 1970 and 1971). . . .

Edward Shils is Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago and also a Fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge. His latest book, just published by the University of Chicago Press, is the first volume of *The Collected Papers* of Edward Shils. . . .

Fritz Rudolf Fries is a young author living in East Berlin. His first novel was published in West Germany a few years ago and, in Leila Vennewitz's translation, *Road to Oobliadooh*, by McGraw-Hill in New York. "The Banana King" comes from a collection of stories, *Der Fernsehkrieg*, recently published in West Germany. . . .

J. R. L. Anderson was for many years the Labour and Industrial Correspondent of *The Guardian*. He is also a well-known sailor and writer on nautical subjects, was closely associated with the late Sir Francis Chichester, and led the Vinland Expedition of 1966 (crossing the North Atlantic in an old 44-ft cutter *via* Iceland and Greenland, trying to reconstruct 10th–11th century Norse voyages to America). . . . He served in India, was a war correspondent in Europe in 1944, and was an Assistant Editor of *The Guardian* in 1967. . . . His books include *Vinland Voyage* (1967), *East of Suez* (1969), *The Ulysses Factor* (1970), *The Upper Thames* (1970). His most recent book, an adventure story called *Reckoning in Ice*, was published by Gollancz (1971). . . .

Harry G. Johnson is Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago and the London School of Economics. He writes regularly for ENCOUNTER and his articles include "Economic Revolutions from Lord Keynes to Milton Friedman" (April 1971) and "A Word to the Third World" (October 1971). . . .

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Life & Letters Today

London

CONFUSION CONFOUNDED: Weetabix tried in the High Court yesterday to stop a rival firm calling their product "Bisk-o-Weet". Weetabix claimed that the two names were so similar as to cause confusion.

But Viota Foods, who started marketing their product earlier this year in competition with Weetabix, claimed that when they chose the name they were determined to avoid confusion with any other trade name. Weetabix's application was dismissed.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

ON IDLENESS: *Opera is [Bernard Levin writes] under fire now as never before, as the effete plaything of the borgewozzie. I recall coming out of Covent Garden after the first night of a new production of* Die Meistersinger, *a couple of years ago, to find Bow Street solid with sit-down students, protesting at the arrest of some of their number, the police station being right opposite. As the opera audience emerged, some of the students, thinking reasonably enough to kill two capitalist birds with one revolutionary stone, turned round and began to abuse us, and one of them was heard to cry distinctly "Idle rich!" I giggled helplessly, but David Cairns began to gibber with rage, and when I enquired what ailed him, he screamed "I don't mind being called rich when I'm not, but after sitting in that opera house from six o'clock to a quarter past midnight listening to bloody Wagner, I* won't *be called idle!"*

THE TIMES

London

AMBIVALENCE: *What does Dr Rowse mean? "Ambivalent as he was, Louis XIII, brother of our Henrietta Maria, was a more complex personality and an abler king than people realise."*

"Ambivalent" cannot mean "bi-sexual," as the doctor seems to imply; nor can it mean "ambiguous." It means, and can only mean, combining at the same time two opposite impulses or tendencies; as, an ambivalent emotion of love and hate.

When our spoken English is being daily corrupted by the BBC, surely dons ought to take more care?

A. L. ROWSE *writes: "Ambivalent" means, literally, valuing both—i.e., in this connection, both sexes.*

DEFINITION: *Dr A. L. Rowse is mistaken when he says that "ambivalent" means literally "valuing both"; this mistake no doubt accounts for his misuse of the word. The Latin "valere" does not mean "value." It is intransitive and means "be strong." "Ambivalent" means literally "having both powers."*

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

New York City

HEMINGWAYIANA: *Yevgeny Yevtushenko, the Russian poet now on tour in the U.S.A., was conveniently routed by the Soviet authorities to the U.S. via Hanoi, and he lectures his American audiences on his experiences there. On receiving an honorary degree at the New School for Social Research, he told of having seen the body of a North Vietnamese teen-ager, clutching a copy of Ernest Hemingway's "For Whom the Bell Tolls." Later he told the same story at the Felt Forum, where he produced the book, which turned out to be "The Old Man and the Sea." Observed poet William Jay Smith: "Next time it will be 'Across the River and Into the Trees'." Said Hemingway's widow Mary: "Can you imagine what would happen in Russia if someone got up in a public place and began to talk about how they put writers in insane asylums?"*

TIME

London

THE LAST WORD: *Miss Olive Behan has no time for the Women's Liberation Movement. She believes that her sex is "quietly superior anyway." She went some way to proving the point yesterday when she became the new national Scrabble champion.*

Good Scrabble is knowing that "quean" means a loose-living woman and that while "zoic", "yo", "ik" and "pi" are perfectly acceptable, "ka", "ad" and "joex" are not found in the "Shorter Oxford Dictionary" and are therefore banned.

The battle of words was fought between 94 contestants in the ballroom of Quaglino's in London. Miss Behan scored 1,215 points, eight more than Mr A. Young, who came second. Mr R. J. Green was third with 1,184. Miss Behan, aged 42, from Widnes, Lancashire, began playing Scrabble eight years ago.

THE TIMES

Peking

RED BLUE-PENCIL: The strongest confirmation so far of the total political—and probably physical—elimination of Lin Piao, former Chinese Defence Minister who was Chairman Mao's heir, came yesterday with the re-appearance in Peking of the "Little Red Book" of Mao thoughts. It has been out of circulation since last November.

Lin's eulogistic "Foreword" to the booklet is missing from the new edition, and so are all other references to him. Significantly, the new edition has so far reappeared only in translation—in English, Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese.

The former Defence Minister disappeared from public view last autumn, and Russian reports said he tried to stage a coup against Mao. It has been reported he died in an air crash in Mongolia last September while trying to escape to Russia.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

POLITICAL THOUGHT: *Two students at the London School of Economics yesterday tore up their degree finals papers as "a political protest at the social grading of exams and the anti-intellectual effect they have on education."*

Mr Bob Dent, the president of the LSE student union until January this year, and Miss Margaret Wellings, who edited the student paper "Beaver", were studying for a B.Sc Economics and a BA Sociology.

Mr Dent commented: "I stood up after half-an-hour and tore up my exam papers in the 'political thought' exams."

THE GUARDIAN

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